

OVERHILLS
(Overhills Historic District)
Fort Bragg Military Reservation, Approximately 15 miles NW of
Fayetteville
Overhills
Harnett County
North Carolina

HALS NC-3
NC-3

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPE SURVEY

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HALS No. NC-3

Location:

Located on Fort Bragg Military Reservation approximately 15 miles northwest of Fayetteville, North Carolina, the 5,700-acre Overhills Historic District straddles Harnett and Cumberland Counties. A historic center of the property is the former Atlantic Coast Line Railroad passenger station located west of Highway 87 and north of the county line in Harnett County. Fort Bragg and Pope Air Force Base proper adjoin the property on the south. The Overhills Historic District, the area of focus for this study, includes about half of the land area of the Overhills tract purchased from the Rockefeller family heirs by the Department of Defense in 1997.

Present Owner/Use:

Overhills is owned and maintained by the Fort Bragg Military Reservation as a holding of the United States Department of the Army, Department of Defense. Fort Bragg serves as headquarters for the XVIII Airborne Corps and Army Special Operations Command, and is home to the 82nd Airborne Division. Overhills is used for company-level, low impact (limited) military training as adopted under an Interim Training Program (ITP). The buildings within the Overhills Historic District are vacant except when military personnel reside at Bird Song at the Hill.

Significance:

The Overhills Historic District is an intact collection of buildings and landscapes—recreational, ornamental and natural—that together reflect the social and sporting privileges of an elite class of Americans from 1906 to 1938. The property is significant in North Carolina as a sizable and intact winter estate and hunt club as well for the continuity provided the landscape by a 65-year Percy Avery Rockefeller family stewardship. The native longleaf pine and wiregrass ecosystem provides a subtle backdrop for the lush evergreen landscaping, vernacular and designed buildings, and the equestrian facilities of the estate, while traces of hunt courses and bridle paths weave across the landscape. Fields of the J. Van Lindley Nursery and tenant farmers are still scattered in their historic patterns.

Historian: Diana Werling, The Jaeger Company, December, 2005.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History of the Landscape

1. Late-Nineteenth Century to 1906, Turpentine Plantation and Timbering

It is proposed . . . to make a great game preserve on this property.

- *Fayetteville Observer*, March 21, 1901, reporting on sale of property by Consolidated Lumber in 1901

Highland Scot Presbyterian immigrants were the first European settlers to the Sandhills region of North Carolina; these early settlers founded a community during the mid-eighteenth century, including Long Street Church in Cumberland County founded in 1758. Malcolm Smith, Archibald McKay, and Archibald Ray were early elders of the church who owned acreage in the area that would later become Overhills. Angus McDiarmid was a later minister of Long Street Church who would be the first person directly associated with the entire Overhills tract of land. Angus McDiarmid was a Scottish immigrant who came to the area in 1794 and married Ann McNeill in 1796. The couple had three sons, the youngest of whom was Daniel who eventually owned the majority of the McDiarmid property. Daniel McDiarmid had the family home, Ardnave, built on high ground on the north side of the Lower Little River, just above the point where the Old Western Plank Road¹ (Highway 87) crosses the Lower Little River.²

The McDiarmid lands produced naval stores, such as tar, turpentine, pitch and rosin, from the native groves of longleaf pine trees on the property. Surviving “Cat Face” trees, kiln ruins and longleaf pine forests on the Overhills property evoke this early period as a turpentine plantation.

Longleaf pine forests are typified by the longleaf pine and wiregrass habitat that are perpetuated by cycles of burning over the forest, either by natural occurrence or managed burning. Much of the uplands of the McDiarmid estate would have been covered in pine and wiregrass that were intentionally burned by the owner or tenant of the property. The process for collecting tree gum for the naval store products was accomplished by cutting a cavity, or box, into the trees about 8 to 12 inches above ground level and attaching a cup or bucket underneath to catch the sap. These boxes created permanent scars on the trees that grew over time and are colloquially called “cat faces”. A three foot area around each boxed tree would have been cleared of leaves, pine needles and any growth to

¹ Amerson, Ellen. “Notes: February, 10, 1979.” Amherst County Roads Vertical File, Amherst County Historical Museum, Amherst, Virginia, 2. “Plank roads were constructed of milled timber, usually eight inches wide, and laid on half of the road.”

² Davyd Foard Hood. *Overhills Historic District National Register of Historic*

Places Nomination, Draft. 1992, 7. The McDiarmid home Ardnave was demolished in the 1960s.

prevent the tree from being burned during fires; the clearance of vegetation and pine straw also provided a better working surface for those who were boxing the tree.³

Upon Daniel McDiarmid's death in 1873, his lands in Cumberland and Harnett Counties were conveyed to his sons, William and Archibald. The brothers received, "...all my lands in Cumberland and Harnett Counties to be equally divided between them, also my Turpentine Still and fixtures, Cooperage tools, etc., also two teams of mules, and Turpentine wagons."⁴ Archibald Knox and William James McDiarmid became prominent area businessmen. However, due to some unfortunate business decisions and a countrywide economic depression, the McDiarmid brothers defaulted on their mortgage in 1892 and McDiarmid turpentine plantation was auctioned in the same year.

John Y. Gossler purchased the McDiarmid Turpentine Plantation property on February 11, 1892, and Gossler quickly sold the property to the Consolidated Lumber Company (of which he was president) on February 13, 1892. The lumber company subsequently cut much of the pine forest on the property, while also amassing contiguous holdings of nearly 20,000 acres during its nine years of ownership. During Consolidated Lumber ownership, local tradition provides that the property was also used for recreational hunting of some type.⁵

An established network of local and regional roads was already developed across the property by the turn of the century, including the Western Plank Road, the Lillington Road and Old Pinehurst Road. The Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley (CF&YV) Railway also dissected the property on its way from Manchester to Spout Springs. The property included a 500-acre lake, created by an earthen dam that was built during the late nineteenth or early twentieth century.⁶ Lillington Road traversed to the south side of the lake, although it is possible that the earliest route of the Lillington Road used the earthen dam for its route.⁷

On March 15, 1901, conceivably after the property was suitably timbered for its pine forests, the Consolidated Lumber Company sold all of its holdings in Cumberland and Harnett Counties to William Robinson Johnston, a ship owner from Liverpool, England. The land was described in two parcels: the first parcel lay, "in Harnett County between Duncan's Creek and Cypress Creek;" the second, larger tract was, "principally the lands of Daniel McDiarmid...east of Duncan's Creek and on both sides of the Atlantic and

³ Carroll B. Butler. *Treasures of the Longleaf Pines*, ed. Patricia Ellis. Tallahassee, Florida: Rose Printing Company, 1998, 43.

⁴ Hood, 8.

⁵ Mattson, Alexander and Associates, Inc. *Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report, Overhills Tract, Fort Bragg, Harnett and Cumberland Counties, North Carolina*. Fort Bragg Cultural Resources Management Program, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, May 2000, 14.

⁶ *Fayetteville Observer*, November 6, 1906.

⁷ Mill dams were often regarded as bridges for the purpose of road usage. Early roads were likely paths through the forest with the largest bushes and trees cut down and burned, but leaving stumps and roots. Amerson, 2.

Yadkin Railroad.”⁸ William Johnston envisioned a prestigious hunt club and game preserve on his newly acquired land, as his son Edmund A. Johnston had participated in fox hunts in the vicinity of the property and was suitably impressed by the property’s hunting potential. The extent to which the land was utilized for hunting between 1901 and 1906 is not known, but the grand hunt club they anticipated was never realized. There are no known surviving buildings on the Overhills property from this early period.⁹

2. 1906 to 1929, Development of Hunt Club and Seasonal Resort

The cry throughout was wonderful; the pack work excellent; hounds ran well in the open, also on the bare, burnt ground. They went through the briers, cane, and water of the swamps, as if there was nothing to stop them, and ran with terrific dash and drive . . .
- Captain Adamthwaite, Overhills fox hunt diary entry, January 1926¹⁰

From 1906 to 1929 a series of owners developed the property into a hunt club and recreational resort that was open for the winter social season from Thanksgiving to Easter. The Croatan Club of Manchester and later the Overhills Country Club became a popular stop for a wealthy clientele of hunt club members and their friends. Investors made substantial improvements to the property as they developed recreational activities such as fox hunting, polo, golf, fishing, bird watching, swimming, skeet shooting, bird hunting and trail riding.

In 1906-1907, the Johnston’s sold their land to business partners James T. Woodward of New York and General John Gill of Baltimore. Woodward and Gill subsequently transferred the former McDiarmid plantation to the newly formed Croatan Club of Manchester, of which they were members. The club, established in 1906 by a group of wealthy northern investors, planned to develop a high-end hunt club property.

The Croatan Club’s plans for the property differed little from that of the Johnstons:

. . . a party of Baltimore and New York industrialists have acquired Mr. Edward Johnston’s place, Arranmore, twelve miles from Fayetteville with its 22,000 acres of land, which they propose making a game preserve. Gen. John Gill, who was formerly Receiver of the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley railway, is the moving spirit in the venture... These capitalists will be incorporated as the “Croatan Club,” each of the 12 subscribing at \$5,000 dollars each to the capital stock. With this fund it is proposed to erect a clubhouse and a keeper’s home on the property and to make other improvements as may tend to the comfort and pleasure of the members and their friends when they visit the preserve . . .

⁸ Hood, 12

⁹ Mattson, 14.

¹⁰ Joseph B. Thomas. *Hounds and Hunting Through the Ages*. Lanham, Maryland: The Derrydale Press, 1928, 103.

The tract is in the vicinity of Manchester, in this county, and is partly divided by the Atlantic and Yadkin Division of the Atlantic Coast Line which runs through it. There are 8,000 acres of arable land in the purchase. These will be cultivated in corn, wheat, buckwheat, hay and other necessities for the wild game, but none of the product will be harvested for the market.

There is a lake of 500 acres on the property. The new clubhouse will overlook this and will contain all the comforts of an up-to-date residence. It will be arranged to accommodate the families of members and their friends. . . . The forest, which is of spruce, pine, and hemlock, abounds in deer, squirrels, and rabbits. There are also many foxes to be found, and the sport of hunting these wily animals is expected to be no small part of the pleasure of those who are investing their money in the tract.¹¹

In 1910 the Croatan Club sold the property to James Francis Jordan and Leonard Tufts for a significantly larger amount than the original purchase price. The inflated price indicates that the club made improvements consistent with its goals—likely the hunting lodge and other small buildings as well as hunting courses and cultivated wildlife habitat.

James Francis Jordan was a tobacco merchant and former sheriff of Guilford County, as well as a renowned hunter and guide. Leonard Tufts was the son of James W. Tufts, the developer of the nearby resort of Pinehurst, North Carolina. Tufts quickly sold his interest in the club property to William Kent, a real estate magnate and United States congressman from California.

In 1911 the *Fayetteville Observer* described the property as having a lodge and “some fine farming land” that produced food for wild birds, such as small grains and hay.¹² The farmland was likely located adjacent to Jumping Run Creek, in addition to other scattered fields, and would have been farmed by tenant farmers on the property. In relation to the acreage of forested property, the cultivated land was small. This development pattern—whereby the amount of cultivated land relative to the total acreage of property is comparatively small—would continue throughout the history of the property under study. Later in 1911, the property was described as “thickly wooded, with pines and numerous other trees, and through all flow many streams and everywhere sparkling springs. Deer, partridges, wild turkeys and other game are in abundance.”¹³

The partnership of Kent and Jordan proved to be successful; in 1911 they founded the Kent-Jordan Company and began to acquire adjacent lands. Eventually, the Kent-Jordan Company owned over 35,000 acres in Harnett and Cumberland Counties. Plans for a residential development were discussed, but never realized. However, the company established the Overhills Country Club in 1913, thereby creating a premier recreational

¹¹ *Fayetteville Observer* November 6, 1906; Hood, 14-17.

¹² *Fayetteville Observer* January 4, 1911; Mattson, 15.

¹³ *Fayetteville Observer*, October 4, 1911.

attraction for wealthy northerners in North Carolina during the early part of the twentieth century.¹⁴

The acquisition and development of the former McDiarmid property by out-of-state investors was an example of a growing trend in Southern social history. Largely because of the abolition of slavery and the collapse of the Southern economy after the Civil War, many large agricultural tracts were no longer profitable for local owners. However, industry was flourishing in the North, creating a new class of very wealthy capitalists, financiers, and industrialists. These men had large disposable incomes and could afford longer periods engaged in leisure pursuits. Many companies and individuals acquired seasonal houses in desirable areas throughout the country. Many of these wealthy Northerners purchased large tracts of former agricultural property in Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina to be used as winter retreats.

This phenomenon continued with the establishment of hunting clubs and game preserves in the South. Many plantations along the coast of Georgia and South Carolina were purchased and combined to create vast acreages that would be conducive to raising game. E.T.H. Shaffer commented on Northerners acquisition of Southern plantations in Carolina Gardens, in 1937.

Here seems the fate of the entire rice country—from Georgetown to Savannah hunting clubs have acquired groups of the former plantations, while more than a hundred wealthy men, chiefly from New York and Long Island, own one or more tracts as winter estates, the chief attractions being the ducks and the romantic beauty of ancient gardens and dwellings. Many have restored ruined plantation structures or have built new structures on the old sites, some in harmony with the traditions and atmosphere; others as they saw fit. Thus has come into sudden existence a new order of Carolina plantation masters. And very happily so. Otherwise, a few more decades of neglect, a few more forest fires, and the surviving dwellings and gardens of the pre-Confederate War rice plantations would have vanished as utterly from the face of the land as did the more ancient swamp plantations of colonial days.¹⁵

Unlike the coastal plantations-turned-hunt camps, the Croatan Club was an enormous acreage of cutover pine forest with remnant brush piles and abandoned logging roads crossing the landscape. This rough terrain, although not immediately suitable for row crop agriculture, was a perfect habitat for wildlife such as turkey, fox and deer. With some increased investment and targeted maintenance, this former turpentine plantation was an ideal hunt club habitat. Also significant in the development, and survival, of a hunt club in the inland Sandhills was the accessibility of the area from the populated East Coast and Midwest. The reorganization of the Southern Railway, started in 1894 by J.P.

¹⁴ Mattson, 15.

¹⁵ Hood, 19.

Morgan and Company, made the North Carolina Piedmont, and later the Sandhills, a one day's trip from New York.¹⁶

Jordan and Kent made significant improvements to their property by 1913, including a clubhouse, separate white and black servants' quarters, and a nine-hole golf course. These improvements were located at an area of the property that was known as the Hill, as it was a high point with scenic views of the property (Figure 1). The Hill would become the hub of activity at Overhills and the residential compound for all future guests and owners of the property. By 1916 additional club buildings were located east of the clubhouse, including a barn, hunt kennel, kitchen building, railroad passenger station and a tennis court (Figure 2). The Overhills Lake was also stocked with fish.¹⁷

The Overhills golf course, designed by Donald Ross, was constructed in two phases, with the design of the first nine holes begun in 1910 and likely completed by the opening of the Overhills Country Club in December 1913. The remaining nine holes were completed by 1916¹⁸. Holes No. 1 and No. 10 began at the Hill, while Holes No. 9 and No. 18 finished at the Hill. The 72-par course featured an underground irrigation system and took advantage of the natural topography and sand hills to present a challenging and scenic course.

Donald Ross (1872-1948) was a Scotsman who relocated to the United States in 1899 to build and manage a Boston-area golf course. From humble beginnings he went on to develop a stellar reputation as a talented designer who worked with the natural terrain to develop a challenging, yet deceptively simple, course. By his death in 1948, Ross designed and built over 400 golf courses from his winter office at Pinehurst, North Carolina, and his summer and satellite offices in Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania. His courses have been the site of over 100 U.S. National Championships. Trademark Ross design characteristics are recognizable at Overhills, including his use of small sand greens, the utilization of the natural topography of the site, and the inclusion of a number of water obstacles. Ross kept field notes as he toured a site, recording the features he envisioned (Figure 3). Unlike many Ross courses, the Overhills golf course is significant for having undergone very few changes over the last ninety years.¹⁹

A contemporary description of the Overhills Golf Club in 1916, first reported in the *Raleigh News and Observer*, recounted,

¹⁶ John Moody. *The Railroad Builders, A Chronicle of the Welding of the States*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1919. <cpr.org/Museum/Railroad_Builders/Railroad_Builders_10.html>.

¹⁷ Hardie, P.W. and Bain, G.L., 1916, Overhills: Club Hotel County Property. Overhills Map Collection, Fort Bragg Cultural Resources Management Program, Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Mattson, 22.

¹⁸ Donald J. Ross, et al. *Golf Has Never Failed Me: The Lost Commentaries of Legendary Golf Architect*. Chelsea, Michigan: Sleeping Bear Press, 1996, 239; Hood (*Fayetteville Observer*, March 29, 1916; April 19, 1916), FN-8 and FN-9.

¹⁹ Lisa McNeely. *Donald Ross Golf Course Overhills Land Package Fort Bragg, North Carolina*. Fort Bragg Cultural Resources Management Program, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, December 2002, 4; Christopher J. "Kim" Elliman. *Overhills History*, 1989. Overhills Document Collection, Fort Bragg Cultural Resources Management Program, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

*Overhills has provided for the fondness for golf that is already prominent and daily increasing. On a ridge adjoining the hotel is already in existence a clubhouse that is well equipped little hotel, little as compared to the big one that is to be built, and in front of the clubhouse are the beginning points of two folk (sic) courses. These are among the best on earth, or at least that is what a golf enthusiast told me as we wandered over the ground while he played. He is a Pinehurst man, and a golf devotee. The two courses were planned by Donald Ross, who is the high priest of things pertaining to the game.*²⁰

Early aerial views of the Overhills golf course show an 18-hole course with an immature landscape (Figure 4). Historic photos on the ground communicate a scenic and well-manicured set of fairways (Figure 5, Figure 6, Figure 7).

To raise funds for their vast and expanding estate, in 1911 the Kent-Jordan partnership sold 650 acres of their property along Jumping Run Creek to the J. Van Lindley Nursery Company, from Pomona, North Carolina, for use as a branch nursery.²¹ The Lindley Nursery was one of a handful of large nurseries that figured prominently in the emergence of Southern agriculture during the postbellum period. The company supplied grapevines and assorted fruit and nut trees to farmers, commercial orchards, and vineyards throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By the turn of the century, the prosperous J. Van Lindley Nursery owned large amounts of nursery property in Guilford, Moore, Forsyth, and Harnett Counties, North Carolina.

There was only one cleared field on the property when the nursery purchased the land. Over time the nursery increased their cultivated area to include fields known locally as “Possom Bottom,” “Rice Patch,” and “Lashley Field.”²² The fields along Jumping Run Creek were some of the company’s primary means for growing nursery stock. Some of the plant materials grown at the Overhills branch nursery included apple trees (*Malus species*), Norway Maple trees (*Acer platanoides*), pear trees (*Pyrus species*), Texas Umbrella trees (*Melia azedarach 'Umbraculiformis'*), and grapevines (*Vitis species*) (Figure 8, Figure 9, Figure 10, Figure 11, Figure 12, and Figure 13).²³

By 1914, the nursery company increased its holdings in Harnett County to over 1800 acres.²⁴ The J. Van Lindley Nursery Company operated the branch nursery at Overhills from 1911 to 1932 and constructed two operation centers with multiple houses and nursery support buildings along Jumping Run Creek and the nursery fields. Workmen constructed a two-story residence for the nursery manager and his family on the property, as well as a bungalow for Paul Cameron Lindley and nursery workers’ quarters. In the 1920s, the Overhills freight station was constructed along the Atlantic Coast Line Tracks in order to ship nursery stock to Greensboro and elsewhere. Nursery Road was

²⁰ *Fayetteville Observer*, April 19, 1916.

²¹ Mattson, 15.

²² Mattson, 17; Hood 109.

²³ J. Van Lindley Nurseries Collection, GSO-5, Greensboro Historical Museum, Greensboro, NC.

²⁴ Hood, 109-110.

constructed by Lindley employees around 1920 to connect the nursery with the newly built freight station, also constructed by the Lindley Nursery, at the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad.²⁵

Early investors in the Overhills Country Club included Percy Avery Rockefeller (1878-1934), nephew to oil magnate and financier John D. Rockefeller, and William Averell Harriman (1891-1986)—both successful businessmen from families of the American social elite of the period. Harriman and Rockefeller became enamored with the property and built cottages for themselves and their families and guests on the Hill adjacent to the clubhouse. The men ultimately guided the development of facilities on the property that suited their particular sporting passion: polo for Harriman and fox hunting for Rockefeller (Figure 14).

James Francis Jordan died in 1919 and Percy Avery Rockefeller purchased much of Jordan's interest in the Kent-Jordan property. By 1920, Rockefeller had assumed a central role in the operation of Overhills.²⁶ During the 1920s Percy Avery and his wife Isabel Stillman Rockefeller continued to acquire tracts of land—a total of twenty within Harnett and Cumberland Counties—in order to expand hunting lands and protect the estate from development. Many tracts were purchased in Isabel Rockefeller's name.²⁷

In 1921 the Overhills Land Company was established as the business organization responsible for the maintenance and operations of the Overhills property and the country club grounds. The Overhills Land Company constructed buildings and improved roads to serve recreational and operational needs, as well as employed a significant number of workers to maintain the clubhouse and grounds and the Shooting Syndicate. The Shooting Syndicate was a limited membership hunt club of fifteen men who had exclusive hunting and accommodation privileges at the Overhills Country Club. Members could bring guests (in addition to families who were included) to hunt for additional charges; privileges also included use of the golf course, motor transportation, and dog kenneling on the property.²⁸ Percy Avery Rockefeller and William Averell Harriman were standing members of the Shooting Syndicate.

The Harriman Cottage was constructed ca. 1918 and the Covert Cottage was built ca. 1921-1922 for Rockefeller (Figure 15 and Figure 16). A semi-circular entrance drive bordered by evergreens was completed at Harriman Cottage and juniper plants and boxwood marked the entrance drive to Covert Cottage (Figure 17). Mrs. Isabel Stillman Rockefeller planted flowers and edged her landscaped beds at Covert Cottage with brick.²⁹

²⁵ Mattson, 17.

²⁶ Hood, 44.

²⁷ Overhills Archives, Fort Bragg Cultural Resources Management Program (FBCRMP), Box 120; Mattson, 34.

²⁸ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1923-014.

²⁹ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1921-003; OHD 1923-013, Receipts of purchased "hard brick" from the E. A. Poe Brick Company.

The Lindley Nursery was a primary source for landscape materials to ornament the Overhills Country Club and estate; many of the plants purchased by the Overhills Land Company from the nursery were evergreen, or bloomed in the winter or early spring, in order to make the estate most attractive during its winter season. Some of the documented plant materials purchased from Lindley Nursery during the 1920s include Southern Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*), English Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), Nandina (*Nandina domestica*), Border Forsythia (*Forsythia x intermedia*), Japanese Privet (*Ligustrum japonicum*), Deodar cedar (*Cedrus deodora*), Flowering Quince (*Cydonia japonica*), Firethorn (*Pyracantha coccinea*), and Amur River Privet (*Ligustrum obtusifolium*).³⁰ In 1928, records indicate that “17 Large Evergreen Magnolias [were moved] from Lindley Nursery to Estate at Overhills”.³¹ It took some time for early plantings to take root and thrive at the Hill; early photographs show a landscape devoid of any thick vegetation.

The Hill had the benefit of electric power during the 1920s, as well as fire hydrants and yard hydrants placed in several locations. A deep well (location unknown) and the Overhills Lake supplied water to the Hill. This water was pumped to and stored in the ca. 1925 water tank erected behind Harriman Cottage.³² The entire property relied on septic systems for its sewerage, and by 1928 the clubhouse and the kennels received direct telephone service from Carolina Telephone and Telegraph.³³

By the mid-1920s, an existing barn located east of the clubhouse along the entrance road had been converted into a barn for lodging Harriman’s polo ponies (Figure 18). A polo field was created on the west side of the golf course near the modern Hole No. 15; every polo season required teams of company laborers to maintain the polo field.³⁴ Polo matches were held with the nearby Pinehurst Sandhills Polo Club and Fort Bragg polo teams.³⁵ Other sports at the club included riding, tennis, and skeet shooting; records indicate that the club leased trap equipment from 1921 to 1926.³⁶

Captain Frank N. Miller was acting manager of the Overhills club from approximately 1922 to 1928; the fact that Miller was a competitive polo player likely reflects the enthusiasm for the sport at Overhills. Two of the club’s hunt department employees during the late 1920s were Rudolph Singleton and William B. Bruce; these accomplished riders and fox hunters were steeplechase riders in Middleburg, Virginia, when Percy Avery Rockefeller hired them to come to work at Overhills.³⁷ Employees for the hunt department were primarily responsible for the care and training of the horses and hounds

³⁰ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1929-010.

³¹ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1928-016.

³² This water tank was relocated to the small hill at the corner of Nursery Road and the road fronting the hunt club. In 1969 a modern water tower was constructed.

³³ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1925-016; March 25, 1925; September 15, 1928.

³⁴ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1925-007.

³⁵ Mattson, 23.

³⁶ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1921-008; OHD 1927-06.

³⁷ Rose, Sol. Principal and Owner, The Rose Group / McKim & Creed, Fayetteville, North Carolina. Interview by Diana Miles Werling, May 24, 2005.

used for fox and bird hunting, including providing guides for the hunts. Guides were local residents who knew the landscape of the property and could direct the flow of the hunt. Each hunt had its own guide, on the company payroll, which was noted in the hunt logbooks.

By the mid-1920s, complexes of recreational and club support buildings radiated to the north and east of the clubhouse, including passenger and freight stations for the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad and a new riding stable. This was the heyday of the Overhills club, with a winter social season for guests to enjoy hunting and riding, in particular. Overhills—as it was colloquially referred to over time—provided abundant lands for hunting, within its own borders and also with neighboring properties whose owners had agreed to allow passage to hunting parties.

One significant tract acquired by Percy Avery Rockefeller during this time was Long Valley Farm, a neighboring working farm owned by a scientific farmer named R.W. Christian. Christian was a progressive farmer who experimented with new approaches to livestock breeding, crop production and land management.³⁸ The farm was known for its pedigreed Lone Star cotton, pure bred Duroc Hogs, and Christian's progressive agricultural practices.³⁹ In 1925, Long Valley Farm had 200 acres under cultivation by Christian, and 500 acres cultivated by the twelve tenants living on the property. Acreage worked by the tenants included 320 of cotton, 250 of rye, 250 of cowpeas, 40 of hay, 15 of rye, and 5 of garden produce.⁴⁰ After Christian's death in 1927, Rockefeller partnered with another Overhills investor from Cleveland, Ohio, Windsor T. White in order to purchase the 966.72 acre farm, along with buildings, equipment and significant livestock and produce on site.⁴¹ In 1936 White sold his part of the farm to James Stillman Rockefeller, nephew of Percy Avery Rockefeller. Rockefeller followed by selling his half of the farm to his nephew in 1937.⁴²

Some local families, such as the Brinkleys, sold their land to the Overhills Land Company and continued as tenants on the property. The Brinkleys were a large extended African-American family who were residents of Harnett County as early as 1870.⁴³ The family owned property on the north side of what is now the Overhills Historic District, and over time the multiple tracts (many belonging to the heirs of B.B. Brinkley) were

³⁸ Mattson, 18.

³⁹ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1923-010; Iowa Purebred Swine Council, <www.iowapork.org/ipsc/ipsc_duroc.htmlwww.iowapork.org>. "The red breed of hogs known as Duroc is a major contributor to almost every successful hog operation. This breed has long been known for its ability to grow faster on less feed. The Duroc's ability to display a rapid growth rate, coinciding with efficient conversion of pound of feed to pounds of red meat, is unequaled by any other breed."

⁴⁰ Farm Census Reports, Cumberland County, Manchester Township. North Carolina Department of Agriculture, Statistics Division, 1925. North Carolina State Archives.

⁴¹ Hood, 61.

⁴² Long Valley Farm remained in the ownership of James Stillman Rockefeller until his death in 2004 at age 102. Rockefeller bequeathed the property to The Nature Conservancy in his will.

⁴³ 1870 Population Census.

sold to Kent-Jordan or Overhills.⁴⁴ The 1925 and 1935 Farm Census Reports for Harnett County, North Carolina, show several Brinkleys raising corn and some tobacco on their properties. Typical for all farmed tracts on the Overhills site, only a small percentage of the overall acreage of the property was actively cultivated.⁴⁵

The Overhills Land Company was responsible for the management of approximately 30,000 acres, which involved the maintenance of forest and wildlife habitat for fox and bird hunting, and oversight for a diversity of agricultural activities. The company had a separate farm staff that provided labor as needed, in addition to the tenant farmers who cultivated acreage owned by the Overhills Land Company. The conveyance of the Overhills property from the early twentieth century through Rockefeller ownership of the 1920s likely included a number of existing tenant farms that provided lodging and employment for those harvesting and growing crops for absentee owners. However, it is not known which tenant families may have been associated with the Overhills land prior to Rockefeller.

The 1925 Farm Census Report for Harnett County lists 30 tenants residing at Overhills on 3,034 acres of land. Of these acres, 360 were under cultivation. Cotton was by far the most common crop being cultivated, followed closely by corn and tobacco as a distant third. Other crops included rye, wheat, sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes, and garden produce (dewberries, cucumbers, watermelons, tomatoes and peas). J. Van Lindley Nursery Company was listed with 1000 acres, 400 of them cultivated with corn, "small grains cut green," "soybeans for hay," sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes, melons/berries and garden produce (dewberries, cucumbers, tomatoes and peas). Nursery stock was not included in the survey.⁴⁶

In 1935 the Farm Census reported the Overhills Land Company with 16,862 acres, of which 62 acres were under cultivation by tenants. Crops produced in order of acreage were corn, cotton, tobacco, "Lespedeza plowed under, seed & hay," and truck crops. Also included in the census were 1,393 acres owned by Mrs. Isabel Rockefeller. Tenants cultivated 144 acres of corn, lespedeza, soybeans, rye, wheat, tobacco, cotton and oats. She also owned fifty fruit trees. The only property listed under P.A. Rockefeller ownership was an uncultivated 125-acre tract. Several small tenant farms were also listed at Overhills in 1935.⁴⁷

The Overhills Land Company recorded the names of the tenant farmers on the property in 1926. These tenants became employees of the Overhills Land Company and sold their crops for market through the company; in turn the company provided equipment, seed, fertilizer, and foodstuffs as needed. Tenants included Charlie Hare, Sandy Jones, Henry King, Tom Johnson, Marshall McIver, George McDougal, A.B. Cameron, Abraham

⁴⁴ Rose & Percell Inc., Surveyors, Engineers, Planners, Fayetteville North Carolina, 1978, Overhills Incorporated. The Rose Group / McKim & Creed Company Archives, Fayetteville, North Carolina.

⁴⁵ Farm Census Report, Harnett County, Anderson Creek Township, 1925.

⁴⁶ Farm Census Report, Harnett County, Anderson Creek Township, 1925.

⁴⁷ Farm Census Report, Harnett County, Anderson Creek Township, 1935.

Cameron, Dave Cameron, Albert Goins, N.D. McLean, Joe Goins, Josher (Jasper) Wood, French McKellar, Alex McRae, Jim Oats, Garland Alderman, Henry Alderman, John Dobbin, Hub Dobbin, John S. McNeil, John Lewis McNeil, Russ McNeil, Sandy McLaughlin, Toms Williams, John D. McGregor, E.S. Sheppard, Amos Jones, Tom Dobbin, Stanley Benton, Frazier Gilchrist, J.S. Gaines, O.C. Graham, Josh Lofton, Willis McRae, A.A. Roan, Roy Truelove, and Harry Washington.⁴⁸

Many of the tenants also worked for the company in other capacities, including farm labor and tar production. Farm accounts from 1925 reflect payments made by the Overhills Land Company to J.L. McCormick, A.B. Cameron, and Henry Alderman for tar hauling, while other payments were given for an advance on a kiln (required for production of naval stores) and barrels of tar. The Overhills Land Company continued the agribusiness of selling tar for naval stores well into the 1920s, and referred to these workers as the “tar team” in its records.⁴⁹ The numbers of tar barrels harvested on the estate by tenants or employees were recorded in Smith’s Tar Commission records. The first quarter of 1925 netted the estate 395 barrels of tar for market.⁵⁰

Recorded farm labor included, among other things, cutting and sawing wood, unloading tar barrels, hauling tar and hay, plowing corn, working pea patches, fighting fires, watering shrubbery, working on the polo field, caring for Mrs. Harriman’s lawn, maintaining the golf course, working on the club grounds, carpentry, the Shooting Syndicate and dragging the road.⁵¹ Dragging the road was a method used for re-grading and redistributing material on the roadway by dragging a heavy object behind a truck or tractor. Various objects may have been used to create the drag, such as an I-beam or piece of chain link fence weighted by a log.

The vegetative patterns created by tenant farms at Overhills, with small fields interspersed with forested areas and connected by farm roads, was an ideal habitat for fox and birds. Bird habitat calls for irregular fields half-grown in weeds and brush that provide nesting sites, protection and food for quail and their offspring.

Explained in Brueckheimer’s *Leon County Hunting Plantations*, quail spend most of their life

*on the borders or edges between cover and open areas, between forest and field, between thickets and pasture, between cornfields and thickets. Managing land so as to produce the best crop of quail requires careful attention to the management and provision of the best type of border situations . . .*⁵²

⁴⁸ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1926-042

⁴⁹ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1925-001

⁵⁰ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1925-007

⁵¹ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1925-005, 007, 009, 010

⁵² W.R. Brueckheimer. *Leon County Hunting Plantations; An Historical and Architectural Survey*. Tallahassee, Florida: Historic Tallahassee Preservation Board, 1988, 69.

The hunt club dedicated significant resources towards developing and providing good quail habitat, both through the planting of appropriate grains as well as stocking the property with birds such as wild ducks, partridges, pheasants and quail. In 1934 the Overhills Land Company planted fifty or sixty “bird patches” in scattered locations around the property. Avery Rockefeller stated the following in 1936:

*The most important consideration for all of us [at Overhills] is the conservation of quail. Nobody is more interested in that than we are. Besides protecting the quail the year round, we not only plant extensive food patches, but also hand feed when the ground is covered with snow and again during the later winter and spring, when the natural food supply is almost exhausted.*⁵³

Bird hunting courses were usually laid out along irregular sand trails in such a way as to provide a half-day hunt; these sand trails were typically no wider than needed to accommodate mule-drawn shooting wagons. These hunt courses also acted as firebreaks during controlled burns.⁵⁴ The irregular sand trails and scattered patches that are visible in the 1938 aerial photograph of Overhills clearly indicate this pattern.

“Bird Logs” for the bird hunts at Overhills Country Club from the early to the mid-1920s contain the following column headings: Name, Date, Guide, Dogs, Game Bagged, Game Found, Section Hunted, Remarks. Of particular interest are the hunt courses that are noted in the logs—the names of the hunt courses cover a diverse area and were named for physical features of the land or for the tenant family or owner who worked the property:

*Townsend, Buffalo, Ben Thomas, Fairley Swamp, Harris etc, NE Ben Thompson, Home, Bain, Lawsons, 100 acres near Mr. Christian, Harris Place, Left of Kennels to Plank Road. . . . Left Rain Brook to Bain Field, Right Rain Brook to H. Alderman's, Buffalo, Club to Marshalls, Spring Bridge to McDongals, Harris Place, Club to Bain Field Round Marshall's, Monroe Road, Mr. Christian's Place to Saw Mill, Scotchman's Place, Brinkley King's and Ben Thomas's land, Alderman's to Bain Farm, Polo Ground Signal's to Club, Sugar Spring Country, Left of Ben Thomas, Townsend Place, Dobbin's Place, About Golf Course, Around Polo Field, Left of Club, Right of Rockefeller Kennels, Dobbin's and Fairley Swamp.*⁵⁵

Some of these courses extended beyond legal boundaries of the hunt club property; however, cooperative agreements were established between the hunt club and adjacent property owners whereby the hunting party could pursue game on surrounding private properties so as to extend their hunting grounds.

⁵³ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1932-006

⁵⁴ Kevin McGorty, C. Lea Wolfe, W.N. Thurston, Tall Timbers Plantation National Register Nomination, 1989.

⁵⁵ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, Bird Hunt Logs, 1923-1924, 1924-1925.

Just as birds were stocked on the property, so were foxes regularly shipped to the estate on the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad from other states in order to provide a better hunting experience for club guests.⁵⁶

A significant place at Overhills was the hunt stable and kennels located east of Nursery Road along the so-called “Kennel Road.” In the mid-1920s, at least forty hounds were kept in the hunt kennels; staff requirements were one head dog handler and two other kennel staff.⁵⁷ The original hunt kennel, located east of the Hill, was moved at least once in the early 1920s due to excessive moisture from its swampy location near Muddy Creek. Club manager Captain F.N. Miller wrote to W.A. Harriman in the early 1920s that he wanted to move the kennel houses “on high ground away from the swamp”; apparently the dogs had acquired hookworms and were generally so unhealthy that they were being boarded at another kennel off the immediate property.⁵⁸ It is unclear what year the new hunt kennel was constructed; but it is likely that it was built in the mid-1920s. By 1927 an addition was made to the hunt kennel, including iron fencing ordered from the Anchor Post Fence Co by the Overhills Land Company’s Hunt and Kennel Department.⁵⁹ The Reineke-Dixon Construction Company constructed the hunt stable in late 1927-early 1928 after an earlier hunt stable burned down in March 1927.⁶⁰ E. W. Reineke was a Fayetteville contractor who built large homes in Fayetteville, Pinehurst and the surrounding area. The company constructed many structures at Overhills, as recorded in estate records.

The hunt stable and hunt kennel were almost identical U-shaped buildings that faced one another along a north-south axis. A unique landscape feature called the Great Circus separated the two buildings (Figure 19). This ceremonial arena was slightly oblong or circular in shape and was bordered by privet hedges. A straight clay avenue, lined with hedges, connected the courtyards of the stable and kennel. At the four cardinal points of the circular center were paired concrete columns; these columns served as the entrances to the Great Circus from the stable, kennel, and the east and west sides of the Great Circus. The concrete columns were cast with a “wood-grain” pattern and topped with a statue or scone. Photographs from 1932 show a manicured, dense privet hedge circling the Great Circus and bordering the central walk (Figure 20, Figure 21 and Figure 22). Entries from the central walk into the center of the arena were cut into the hedges; the arena itself contained natural obstacles such as a hedge wall, timber rail fence, and a bank jump. Such jumping obstacles helped school horses and dogs by approximating the types of hurdles to be encountered in the rough and unpredictable terrain at Overhills (Figure 23). Wood and wire fences created grassed paddocks that were bordered with dense hedges. A view of the hunt stable and kennel from Kennel Road was an unheeded one (Figure 24), unlike later years where the thick native vegetation would completely obscure the view of the complex. Central to the function of the Great Circus as a focus of

⁵⁶ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1926-037.

⁵⁷ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1927-018.

⁵⁸ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1923-014.

⁵⁹ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1927-024, December 1927.

⁶⁰ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1927-014.

fox hunting activity was the Pine Allée that stretched westward from the paired concrete piers. The allée continued all the way to Nursery Road, encountering a second set of paired piers approximately halfway down its length. Aerial photographs over the next several decades show the maturation of the evergreen plantings of the Great Circus, as well as around the hunt stable and kennel (Figure 25 and Figure 26).

Joseph Brown Thomas, a guest at Overhills and an expert foxhound breeder from Virginia, designed the hunt kennels for Percy Avery Rockefeller. A contemporary account of the Overhills property is found in Joseph Brown Thomas's 1928 book *Hounds and Hunting Through the Ages*.

The gently rolling Overhills country of North Carolina presents a problem which perhaps exists in few other fox hunting centers... In most sections it is practically pure sand, underlaid by clay; except for isolated cotton fields here and there, it is entirely covered by a sparse growth of pine, interspersed by scrub oak... There is no fencing, but ditches exist in some low-lying spots which in the days before the Civil War were reclaimed from swamp land, by slave labor, for plantations. Although there is no wire, there is the unique problem of long, low swamps which fringe the numerous streams, and it is necessary to make crossings in these natural barriers by means of corduroy roads.⁶¹ From many high points in this country, straight rides have been cut seventy-five feet wide and miles in length. These rides, radiating from a given point, give delightful vistas through the woodland remindful of the rides in French forests heretofore described . . .⁶²

Employees of the Overhills Land Company maintained the hunting routes Thomas describes. It is likely that the hunting paths during this period consisted of wide field margins and relatively open canopy of the longleaf pine forest connected by sand roads and hunting trails. Recent accounts suggest that crews of forty men maintained ten-foot wide hunting courses; either way, these intentional allées were not maintained past the early 1930s for fox hunting.⁶³

Oral tradition of the estate attributes the design of the hunt courses and bridle trails, as well as the design of the ornamental plantings of the Hill, to Beatrix Jones Farrand (1872-1959). Farrand was one of the eleven founding members of the American Society for Landscape Architects; she was also a friend and designer for Abby Aldrich Rockefeller and Eyrie Garden at Seal Harbor, Maine. Although Farrand's hallmark of merging the natural and designed landscape, often with native plantings, is in keeping with the Overhills ornamental and recreational landscape, no documentation has been found linking her work to the Overhills estate.

⁶¹ Corduroy roads were common early roads made of tree trunks laid crosswise in the road with soil shoveled between and over logs. The roads were used in swamps and marshes. Source: Amerson, 2.

⁶² Thomas, 184.

⁶³ Rose, May 24, 2005.

One of the more interesting landscape-related events at Overhills during the 1920s was the arrival of Percival Rosseau in January of 1925. Rosseau (1859-1937), an accomplished painter of hunt hounds and hunt scenes, resided at Overhills for periods of time from 1925 to the end of the decade. While visiting Overhills, Rosseau and his wife Ethel lived in a studio constructed for them by the Overhills Land Company in 1926. Located on the small hill northeast of the hunt stable in the approximate location of the water tower, the studio was constructed by the Reineke-Dixon Construction Company.⁶⁴ Two of Rosseau's paintings of the Overhills landscape are published in Joseph Brown Thomas' 1928 book *Hounds and Hunting Through the Ages*, and feature scenes of hunters and hounds traversing a landscape of longleaf pine, wiregrass and former cotton fields. The paintings' rich landscape colors and textures are especially evocative of this historic hunting landscape. Rosseau died at Overhills in 1937 and is buried in Fayetteville.

A constant theme in the management of the Overhills property was the significant role played by fire. Some of the vast forests on the property were burned over by prescribed fires intentionally set to burn out the brush⁶⁵; other fires were wild fires started by lighting. Another unintentional source of fire was the dried resin on box-cut pine trees that created a highly flammable substance susceptible to sparking fire.⁶⁶ The Overhills Land Company paid its farm laborers to fight fires when necessary,⁶⁷ and the Overhills land managers directed substantial resources toward the prevention of unwanted fire, including the construction of fire lines.⁶⁸ Fire protection associations were also formed by area property owners, such as the Overhills Protective Association that covered the 30,000 acres of the Overhills Land Company and 5,000 acres of neighboring property. Annual dues to the association paid for laborers to build fire lines, to maintain and staff fire towers, and to maintain telephone lines across the property. By the early 1930s, the federal government was subsidizing fire protection at Overhills through forestation programs by the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC). According to the report of the Overhills Protective Association for the fiscal year 1932-1933,

During the year about fifty miles of fire lines were burned with the aid of relief workers, in addition to twenty miles burned where association funds were used. A total of 5,625 man hours of labor was donated for work of various kinds to the Overhills area by the R.F.C. projects, and without cost to the members. . . . At the present time plans for the ensuing year contemplate the construction of fire breaks under the President's Reforestation Program, in the Overhills area which

⁶⁴ Rose, May 24, 2005; Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1926-037; OHD 1927-026.

⁶⁵ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1941-058; OHD 1942-053; W.B. Bruce, manager of Overhills Farms, Inc., notes in correspondence to owner Avery Rockefeller that they had burned the block south of Croatan and planned on burning the Scotchman's Place and the block around the kennels and stables.

⁶⁶ Audrey Moriarity. "Pinehurst Beginnings,"

<http://www.themooreexchange.com/moore/Moore_County_&_Sandhills_History/Pinehurst.htm>, 2004.

⁶⁷ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1925-009

⁶⁸ Fire lines are linear barriers dug, scraped or burned in the soil in order to prevent the advancement of a wildfire.

*will break up the present large timbered areas into smaller compartments, and by the construction of roads on these breaks make all sections more easy of access by autos, trailers, equipment and fire fighters. This will give us a tremendous advantage in fighting fires in out-lying sections, which were formerly inaccessible except under great difficulties and by foot traffic.*⁶⁹

While it is not known how much of the Overhills property was burned on a regular basis, it is clear from historic photographs and paintings of the landscape of the 1920s that there is a healthy longleaf pine and wiregrass ecosystem at Overhills that is only possible through fire (Figure 27).⁷⁰ In 1931-1932 when a drought season dried out even the swampy areas on the property, wild fires burned 3,090 acres of the 36,000 acres within the purview of the Overhills Protective Association.⁷¹ In 1937, the Overhills Land Company requested US Representative J. Bayard Clark to consider retaining the C.C.C. Camp No. 429 on the Fort Bragg Reservation that had

*done forestation work in Cumberland, Harnett and possibly other counties, in the way of forest fire trails, etc., which has proved very beneficial in stopping forest fires, and of course if these trails are not maintained they will soon grow up thereby not accomplishing the desired results. . . . This being a large wooded area will make the forest fire hazard greater than some sections.*⁷²

3. 1929 to 1938, Transition of Hunt Club to Private Rockefeller Estate

Too beautiful here now to go anywhere else.

- Isabel Rockefeller [at Overhills] to Percy Avery Rockefeller, July 11, 1933⁷³

The 1920s had been the pinnacle of development for the recreational landscape at Overhills with all the trappings for a bustling hunt and social club. However, the dawning of a new cultural landscape era at Overhills was marked by the Stock Market crash of 1929. The busy resort traffic of the 1920s subsided with the national financial crises; guests of the club continued in fewer numbers through the early 1930s until the last registered guest signed the Overhills Country Club guest book in December 1932.⁷⁴

The year 1929 was also the year that Percy and Isabel Rockefeller completed their new “cottage” at the Hill, known as Croatan. This country home was to be the Rockefeller family’s main residential accommodation and was the architectural highlight of the Hill. A flagstone terrace, an informal garden of evergreen plants and shrubs with a central

⁶⁹ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1932-006

⁷⁰ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, ca. 1920s historic photographs of the Overhills property; Rousseau’s paintings of the Overhills property as included in Joseph B. Thomas’ book, *Hounds and Hunting Through the Ages*.

⁷¹ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1932-006

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1932-009, Western Union Telegram, July 11, 1933.

⁷⁴ Hood, 63.

garden path, and a striking view of the golf course were all features of this new Rockefeller cottage. A rectangular landscape formation, identifiable in 1930s aerial photographs of the Hill, is located to the east of Croatan and Covert Cottage (Figure 28 and Figure 29). With an arched arbor entrance on the east side and a central walkway between two rows of shrubs dividing the garden into two sides, the landscape formation may have been the formal garden that was later surveyed by Mr. Sol Rose in 1949 under contract to Mr. Reineke of the Reineke-Dixon Construction Company.⁷⁵ By 1949, the garden was largely gone, although Mr. Rose reported that Mrs. Anna Rockefeller had an interest in trying to recreate the garden. The garden was apparently never restored, and the topographic survey of the former garden area has been lost. Future documentary findings or oral history accounts may reveal further information about the form and placement of the Rockefeller formal garden.

By 1934, Percy Avery and Isabel Stillman Rockefeller had purchased close to 40,000 acres in the vicinity of Overhills, some of which remained intact as a private Rockefeller winter family retreat over the next sixty-five years (Figure 30)⁷⁶. During the mid-1930s there were many improvements made to the property to suit the Rockefellers' needs, including a large number of buildings at the shops complex, the riding stable to the east of the Hill, a garage building at the hunt stable and a garage at the Harriman Cottage. The riding stable constructed at the entrance compound was a direct reflection of the Rockefellers' continued interest and passion for horses.

As the Depression worsened, the Rockefellers looked to find more ways to utilize the resources of their property. In 1932 Percy Avery Rockefeller hired William B. Bruce, the current manager of the Overhills Land Company's Hunt Country and Kennel Department, to run the farm operation. W.B. Bruce (as the manager would sign all of his work documents) would serve as farm manager for Overhills Farms, Inc. for forty years until his death in 1972.⁷⁷ Under Bruce's leadership, the farm operations were expanded to include more significant agricultural activity such as a dairy, timbering, cattle and cotton. Of significance are the improvements that the Rockefellers made in the physical environment of the tenants who lived on their lands. For example, during the early 1930s Mr. Bruce and other farm employees painted and repaired tenant employees homes, as evidenced by telegram communications during March 1933:

From Mr. Bruce to Isabel Rockefeller: *Davis tried white wash tenant buildings will not stick Creosote in old paint penetrated will not permit removal shall we proceed with paint and color or wait your arrival.*

From Mrs. Rockefeller to Gladys Rock (Overhills): *Tell Bruce have three cottages Hold all good and painted red, triplet and vacant cottage white.*⁷⁸

⁷⁵ 1938 and 1949 Aerial Photographs, U.S. Department of Agriculture; Rose, May 24, 2005.

⁷⁶ Mattson, 36.

⁷⁷ Rose, May 24, 2005.

⁷⁸ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1932-009, Western Union Telegrams, March 11 and 15, 1933.

The J. Van Lindley Nursery, under financial strain, sold its nursery lands in 1932 to Isabel Rockefeller. A total of 1,224 acres of prime nursery fields and the building complexes associated with them were folded into the Rockefeller holdings at Overhills.

Percy Avery Rockefeller died in 1934, effectively leaving the Overhills property in a vulnerable position for several years as his estate was settled. In the meantime, Mrs. Rockefeller acted on her growing concern regarding the lack of health care available to local children by transforming the former Paul C. Lindley cottage on the north end of the Lindley Nursery property into a small health care facility for area children with malnourishment and tuberculosis. This complex, organized as the Hope Farm Preventorium, Inc., operated for a short time, between 1934 until Isabel Rockefeller's death in 1936.⁷⁹

With the death of the elder Rockefellers, the Overhills Land Company and its significant acreage were divided among the Rockefellers' five children, each of whom received a one-fifth undivided interest.⁸⁰ The five children were Isabel Lincoln, Avery Rockefeller Sr., Winifred Emeny, Faith Model, and Gladys Underhill.

In an effort to reduce estate costs and to diversify family investment, approximately 75% of the Overhills estate was sold between 1935 and 1938.⁸¹ The 1938 aerial photograph of the Overhills property also sheds light on other decisions that were made to save money on the estate, such as the decision to abandon the back nine holes of the golf course during the 1930s. The photo illustrates that while the front nine holes are well manicured, the back nine are clearly being let go (Figure 31).

4. 1938 to 1997: Overhills Farms, Inc and Rockefeller Family Retreat

He favored the fox . . .

- Sol Rose giving an explanation for why Avery Rockefeller did not continue fox hunting at Overhills after the death of his father Percy Avery Rockefeller⁸²

The formation of Overhills Farms, Inc. in 1938 by the Rockefeller family heirs formalized a shift from primarily recreational pursuits at the estate to a more equal effort toward farming on the property. Avery Rockefeller Sr. became the president of Overhills Farms, Inc. and took an active role in the operation of the farm. The requirements of a winter estate for the Rockefeller family, as well as an increased focus on agriculture, created quite a few physical changes to existing buildings on the property. Changes made that had an impact on the landscape from the 1940s through the 1990s included the demolition of club-era buildings, the abolition of the tenant farm system, the construction of new cottages and support complexes, and the increase of commercial timbering and agriculture on the property.

⁷⁹ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1934-007

⁸⁰ Hood, 68.

⁸¹ Mattson, 36 and 39.

⁸² Rose, May 24, 2005.

By 1942, the estate was reduced to approximately 8,000 acres; in fact, Rockefeller urgently wanted to sell excess property, writing to W.B. Bruce, “we want to press ahead with sales at almost any price to people who are interested in buying raw land where they will get a few deer, turkeys, quail, etc. We must move some of that land before we go to war and taxes go up.”⁸³ Rockefeller further clarified his position by saying “just the farms and Overhills is all we need.”⁸⁴

Concern about rising taxes that war in Europe would bring was not the only challenge facing the operation of the Overhills estate. Inflated wartime wages at Fort Bragg were drawing laborers away from Overhills, including tenant farmers. Farmers were no longer content with an exclusive employment with the Overhills estate; instead they wanted to work at Bragg and on the farm. W.B. Bruce was not happy with the lack of focus given to the farm by the tenants, and he suggested to Rockefeller that they give additional incentives to the tenants, including an increased percentage of the profit from crops. Ultimately, the tenant system was phased out. In 1942, the dairy at Overhills was also closed.⁸⁵

In 1938, the earthen dam at Overhills Lake was rebuilt and reinforced with a concrete dam.⁸⁶ The company hired the Campbell Water Wheel Company of Philadelphia to design concrete gates, abutments, and a dam mechanism.⁸⁷

The hunt kennel was demolished at some point after 1949. Before that it was occasionally used, once even for a local dog show.⁸⁸ The hunt kennel was not the only demolished club-era building at Overhills. The Rockefeller heirs decided to remove those buildings and structures that were too costly to maintain or not necessary for the current use of the property. The days of grand fox hunting had officially ended with the death of Percy Avery Rockefeller; his children were not enthusiasts of the sport and, therefore, did not consider the hunt facilities a priority for upkeep. The sport of fox hunting had been on the wane at Overhills since the Depression and by the early 1930s, Rudolph Singleton left his position on the hunt staff at Overhills and W.B. Bruce had been promoted from the hunt staff to his new position as farm manager.⁸⁹ Horseback riding would become the major recreational pursuit at the Overhills estate for the heirs of Percy Avery Rockefeller. In the years to come, non-hunting equestrian activities were *de rigueur* at Overhills.

The most significant changes to the appearance of the Hill took place from the 1930s through the 1960s. Rationing of gasoline and materials during World War II prevented the typical mowing and upkeep of the estate, including the golf course. The back nine of

⁸³ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1941-058.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1942-054

⁸⁶ Mattson, 65.

⁸⁷ Campbell Water Wheel Company, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1937, *Dam and Hydro-Electric Diesel Plant*.

⁸⁸ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1941-058

⁸⁹ Rose, May 24, 2005.

the golf course had been abandoned since the mid-1930s, but the war officially closed that part of the course. The reconstruction of the back nine took place after the war, although it was not finished by 1949, as evidenced by an aerial photograph of the same year (Figure 32).

The eventual restoration of the back nine holes of the golf course reflected several changes to the course as configured by Donald Ross. These changes to the golf course included the removal of the original Par 3 Hole No. 14, and the creation of Holes No. 13 and No. 14 out of the original Holes No. 12 and No. 13, respectively. The original Hole No. 11 was carved up to create the modern Hole No. 12.⁹⁰

In the decades following the 1940s, the vegetation on the golf course increasingly thickened. A more recent change to the course included the construction of a firebreak through the golf course in 2002-2003. This decision was made after a wildfire burned perilously close to Bird Song and Croatan in August 2002.

Avery Rockefeller demolished several buildings at the Hill during the 1940s and 1950s, including the Clubhouse (demolished 1945) and the Covert (demolished in the early 1950s). Sycamore was constructed in 1949, closely adjacent to the Covert Cottage and at the end of the garden lane extending from Croatan—thus providing the terminal vista at the end of the garden path that is evident today. It was during 1949 that Mrs. Anna Rockefeller hired Sol Rose, an engineering student at North Carolina State University, to complete a topographic survey for a garden area “behind Croatan” with the intended purpose of restoring a formal boxwood garden installed by Mrs. Isabel Stillman Rockefeller. According to Rose, few remnants of the garden remained at that time; his topographic survey has been lost. Apparently, Mrs. Anna Rockefeller never completed the intended garden restoration,⁹¹ and it is unclear today where this garden may have been located.

Once the Covert Cottage was demolished, Cherokee was constructed ca. 1954-1955 between Sycamore and Harriman Cottage. The vegetation on the Hill was growing progressively thicker, as the introduced plant materials matured and were augmented with the addition of each new cottage. An Estate Office and Manager’s Residence was constructed ca. 1960 to the south of the immediate Hill area; W.B. Bruce and his wife Thelma lived here while managing the estate.

In 1963 Avery Rockefeller designed and constructed a new primary residence for himself and his family on the Hill. Located to the southwest of the original Clubhouse site and sited carefully between existing Holes No. 1, No. 9, No. 10, and No. 18 of the golf course, the rambling cottage was called Bird Song. Louis Burnett designed the lush

⁹⁰ Jeff Irwin. Comparison of Original and Modern Overhills Golf Course. Overhills Document Collection, Fort Bragg Cultural Resources Management Program, unpublished manuscript. Undated.

⁹¹ Rose, May 24, 2005.

ornamental landscaping for Bird Song; the plants used were remnants of the former Lindley Nursery Fields that were dug up and relocated to the Hill.⁹²

During this period a skeet range (ca.1960), a tennis court (ca.1970), and a covered hitching post for horses (construction date unknown) were constructed on the estate at the back of the golf course, at the Hill, and east of the Hill respectively. In January 1969, Mr. Bruce noted in his correspondence that the farm had “recently installed a 100,000 gallon water tank approximately 125 feet higher than the present tank.”⁹³ The new water tower was constructed on the knoll across from the hunt stable at the corner of Nursery Road and Kennel Road. The historic water tank, originally located behind Harriman Cottage on the Hill, had been relocated to the same area by 1942.⁹⁴

Avery Rockefeller, like many of the Rockefeller heirs and family members, was passionate about horses. In the mid-1970s Avery Rockefeller drew a map that outlined the bridle paths that traversed the estate on the west side of Highway 87 (Figure 34).⁹⁵ Included with the bridle path alignments were names of the trails and their lengths. Trail names, just as those of the bird and hunt courses in years past, reflected the names of previous resident families and landscape features. The bridle paths likely followed old hunting trails that evolved into farm roads and recreational trails. Some trail names are Big Fire Break, Jordan’s Ride, Swamp Ride, Mount William Ride, Grand Children’s Ride, Power Line, and Thurman Road. A horse pasture north of the riding stable was used for grazing lands; a horse barn was erected on the west side of the pasture during this era (construction date unknown).

Photographs and maps of the Overhills Historic District property from 1938 to 2005 indicate changes in the coverage of vegetation as it relates to agriculture and land use.⁹⁶ The 1938 and 1949 aerial photographs show a few plowed fields scattered through the property that were being actively cultivated for crops, primarily corn, cotton, tobacco, vegetables, soybeans and hay.⁹⁷ Analysis of photographs and maps from 1949 through 1996 indicate that by the late 1970s little acreage was under active row crop cultivation within the study boundary of the Overhills Historic District. When the company and its tenants no longer cultivated the fields, they were either converted to pasture or abandoned. Abandoned fields gradually underwent a vegetative succession as more substantial plants and trees replaced the grassland.

⁹² Hood, 112.

⁹³ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1924-006. Correspondence dated January 27, 1969 to A.D. Cook, Inc. requesting new water pumps for the new tank.

⁹⁴ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1942-054. A letter from Mr. Bruce to Avery Rockefeller, dated July 15, 1942, stated “The sills under the water tank in back of the Studio [Rosseau’s studio] had rotted and we had to put in new ones and this was quite a job,” indicating that the water tank from the Hill had already been relocated to its current location by 1942.

⁹⁵ Elliman, Christopher J. “Kim,” Mid-1970s, Bridle Trail Map. Overhills Map Collection, Fort Bragg Cultural Resources Management Program, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

⁹⁶ Overhills HALS NC-3 Drawing Package, Sheets 3 and 4, 2005.

⁹⁷ N.C. Farm Census Report, Harnett County, Johnsonville and Anderson Creek Townships, 1935.

A typical process of vegetative succession at the Overhills property begins with Broomsedge (*Andropogon species*), and associated grasses and wildflowers such as purple top (*Brassica rapa*), purple lovegrass (*Eragrostis spectabilis*), ragweed (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*), goldenrod (*Solidago species*), asters (*Aster species*), joe-pye weed (*Eupatorium fistulosum*), wiregrass (*Aristida stricta*), muscadine (*Vitis rotundifolia*), and smilax (*Smilax species*). Longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*) seedlings, loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*) seedlings, and hardwood seedlings such as black oak (*Quercus velutina*), turkey oak (*Quercus laevis*) and scrub oak (*Quercus ilicifolia*) will reforest within five to ten years, although fire prevents seedlings from germinating and would have been used historically by Overhills land managers to keep fields cleared as needed.

By the 1970s, timbering, hog farming, and cattle became the principal agricultural activities on the property. A ca. 1978 map of the Overhills Land Company property indicates that much of the area within the historic district was covered in loblolly pine⁹⁸; large tracts of pine forest were clear-cut for timber during this period (Figure 35 and Figure 36). Some of the clear-cut tracks of land were converted for cattle. At the same time, virtually the entire southwestern quadrant of the property was managed for longleaf pine forest. The retention of the longleaf habitat effectively maintained much of the historic landscape appearance of this portion of the estate and made for beautiful recreational bridle trails. The 1980s brought a return of selective timbering to the property, rather than clear-cutting.⁹⁹

The former Lindley Nursery fields were converted into hay and soybean fields and in 1978, The Rose Group of Fayetteville, NC, was hired to study the flooding occurring along Jumping Run Creek. Overhills Farms, Inc. decided to straighten the meandering Jumping Run Creek in order to provide a better planting ground and prevent flooding.¹⁰⁰ The creek was moved to its current location on the south side of the former nursery fields, and several drainage channels were dug on the periphery of the field to manage flooding—an ongoing problem.

Agricultural production, including hogs, cattle, tobacco, corn, hay, truck crops, and row crops, were cultivated on the Overhills property at various times until the family sold the estate to Fort Bragg in 1997. Many of today's surviving buildings and field patterns reflect this modern period of agricultural development.

Davyd Foard Hood was hired by the Rockefeller family in the early 1990s to prepare a National Register of Historic Places nomination for the majority of the Overhills property. The property studied included approximately 10,000 acres of the Overhills estate, as well as the neighboring Long Valley Farm separately owned by James Stillman Rockefeller (1902-2004) since the 1930s. Hood completed exhaustive archival research

⁹⁸ Donna Williams, Forest Management Incorporated, 1978, Map of Overhills Farms, Inc. Overhills Map Collection, Fort Bragg Cultural Resources Management Program, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

⁹⁹ Hood, 72-73.

¹⁰⁰ Rose & Percell, Inc. *Proposed Drainage in Jumping Run Creek in vicinity of SR 1117*, August 8, 1978.

into the property that provides a firm foundation for any future assessment of the property's historic significance.

The North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office completed a favorable preliminary review of Hood's draft National Register nomination, but the historic district was never brought forward by the owners to be considered for official listing. The Long Valley Farm was listed on the National Register separately in 1993.

5. 1997 to present, Sale of Overhills to Department of the Army

By the end of the Rockefeller era in 1997, the Overhills estate consisted of approximately 10,580 acres. The property was sold to the Department of the Army; this acreage is collectively referred to as the "Overhills tract" by the Department of the Army and Fort Bragg. The acreage purchased is only a portion of the land area that once served as the hunt club, Overhills Land Company, and the Rockefeller estate of the 1920s and 1930s. Much of this historic Overhills estate land was sold over time. The current 10,580-acre Overhills tract has been incorporated into Fort Bragg's Northern Training Area and is used for limited military training.

A study conducted by Mattson, Alexander and Associates, Inc. in 2000 identified the boundary of an Overhills Historic District within the 10,580-acre Overhills tract purchased by the Department of the Army. The historic district includes 5,700 acres and makes up about half of the Overhills tract purchased by the Department of the Army in 1997. Areas of the Overhills estate identified in Hood's proposed National Register Historic District that were not considered part of the historic district identified by the Mattson study included Long Valley Farm; modern farms largely on the east side of Highway 87; abandoned tenant farms that were in poor or ruined condition, post-dated the period of significance, or were located in areas of the estate that had lost much of their historic integrity due to modern development or changing land uses; and out-parcels that historically had been under separate ownership.¹⁰¹

The 5,700 acre Overhills Historic District was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places by the Department of the Army, with concurrence from the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, in 2001.

Hood's study of the Overhills property, as well as the Mattson report, included a survey of the historic building and landscapes within the proposed historic district, as well as National Register eligibility evaluations for the cultural resources. Part of the survey methodologies included the naming of the developed areas within the Overhills Historic District. Organized geographically, the studies assigned specific names to areas of the district with concentrations of historic resources. These Overhills area names established in the Hood and Mattson documents are also used in this HALS documentation package for consistency. The area names are listed and described as follows:

¹⁰¹ Mattson, 58.

The Hill:

Located on the west side of the former Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, north of State Route 1117/Nursery Road and functions as the main residential compound of the estate with six cottages, a servants' quarters, and recreational facilities including an 18-hole golf course.

Entrance Compound:

Located on the north side of State Route 1117/Nursery Road on the east side of the former Atlantic Coast Line railroad corridor and consists of eleven buildings which extend along the east side of the former railroad corridor and the parallel unpaved estate road. The principal buildings include the passenger and freight stations, log hunting lodge, riding stable, and the former polo barn.

Shops Complex:

Located on the north side of State Route 1117/Nursery Road on the east side of the former Atlantic Coast Line railroad corridor, north of the golf course and the residential compound of the Hill and southwest of Overhills Lake and consists of service and maintenance buildings as well as two worker cottages.

Overhills Lake:

Located on the north side of State Route 1117/Nursery Road on the east side of the former Atlantic Coast Line railroad corridor, north of the Entrance Compound and consists of the lake, a concrete dam at Muddy Creek, a bathhouse, a recreational area on the edge of Overhills Lake and a walking trail around the lake.

Hunt Stable Complex:

Located on the south side of State Route 1117/Nursery Road, west of N.C. 87 and consists of the hunt stables, the ruins of the hunt kennels, the Great Circus and pine allée.

Lindley Nursery:

Located on the north and west sides of State Route 1117/Nursery Road, approximately one mile east of junction with N.C. 87 and consists of two distinct building complexes, therein identified in this report as "Lindley Nursery Complex North" and "Lindley Nursery Complex South." The nursery areas consist of worker dwellings, cottages for the nursery owner and manager, and various outbuildings and fields.

Together, the Hill, Entrance Compound, Overhills Lake and Shops Complex make up the primary developed area within the historic district. The Lindley Nursery Complexes, while related to the activities and evolution of the rest of the estate, really forms its own focus of activity. The large majority of the buildings within the entire historic district have been partially preserved in situ, and the areas that contain contributing structures to the historic district are not available for military training. The cultural landscape at

Overhills is strikingly intact and in good condition considering that the area is not actively used except for light military training and maneuvering on the property.

Changes in the appearance of the estate today from the Rockefeller ownership are minimal; the most obvious changes are overgrowth of vegetation and the discontinuation of agricultural activity on the property. Most maintenance completed on the existing estate buildings is aimed at waterproofing and protecting the structural integrity of the largest and most significant buildings, such as Croatan and Harriman Cottage. Large areas of the landscape are returning to an historic longleaf pine and wiregrass ecosystem due to forest management practices of Fort Bragg. New secondary sand roads have been blazed through the estate as part of military training exercises and for firebreaks.

B. Historical Context

1. Overview

The Overhills Historic District exhibits layers of significant cultural landscape features, as well as intact collections of traditional and designed buildings. The rich landscape history of the estate is firmly grounded in the existing native flora and fauna of the property. The beauty of the natural landscape at Overhills, and its associated land uses, successfully attracted the commitment of outside interests beginning in the late nineteenth century. Upon this palette of pine, a series of wealthy investors refined the landscape to suit their desire for recreation, beauty and comfort. The cultivation of commercial nursery stock on the estate also proved to be a successful venture for the J. Van Lindley Nursery Company. The Overhills landscape was preserved in many ways through the stability provided by Rockefeller family stewardship for sixty years. The landscape features that have survived at Overhills include traces of hunt courses, bridle trails and designed vistas; the thriving domestic landscapes of estate buildings; an intact golf course designed by a premier architect; acres of longleaf pine forests; and former nursery fields.

2. Longleaf Pine Forest of the Southeast

The natural cycle of fire and regrowth is the foundation of the longleaf, mixed pine, and wiregrass ecosystem of the southeastern Sandhills region. Although the longleaf pine forests once made up approximately 90 million acres of the southeastern United States' forest, today significant proliferation of these longleaf pine forest are only found in pockets that are increasingly rare and treasured. Only about 2 million acres of longleaf pine forest remain, and most of that is second growth such as at Overhills. Obstacles to the longleaf pine ecosystem include sprawling development, an aversion to fire required for longleaf pine propagation, and the planting of faster growing pine species for commercial sale.¹⁰² It is difficult to find an intact early-twentieth century winter estate from the early twentieth century that retains significant stands of longleaf pine. Examples

¹⁰² U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. <www.fws.gov/carolinasandhills/longleaf.html>. December 2005.

outside of North Carolina include Tall Timbers (listed on the National Register) outside of Thomasville, Georgia, where early twentieth century sport hunting and scientific forestry in the old growth longleaf pine forests eventually resulted in a conservation donation of a 200-acre tract longleaf pine forest to be preserved for perpetuity. Unlike Overhills, however, Tall Timbers was a hunt club developed on a former cotton plantation. It was also developed as a family winter retreat and hunt club, rather than a membership hunt club open to outside investment. Overhills is significant for its intact longleaf pine and wiregrass ecosystem that is unusual to be found today within the context of a historic estate and hunt club.

3. Development of Hunt Clubs and Family Estates in North Carolina

The vernacular and designed landscape at Overhills clearly reflects a pattern seen among groups of wealthy northerners during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that developed large hunting clubs and country retreats in North Carolina and other Southern states. Converting available southern-owned property, these investors enjoyed winter resorts carved out of former agricultural landscapes. Hunting lodges, sand trails and patch farming was maintained to encourage the natural habitat for quail and fox. Hunting was a primary recreational activity, although skeet shooting, golf, riding, fishing and bird watching were also popular. At the same time that these northern visitors were discovering the region, railroads were expanding to provide better access to isolated hunting lands and estate property.

Large tracts of land were purchased in the coastal and piedmont regions of North Carolina for exclusive hunting clubs, including land on the Outer Banks and Currituck Sound. One of the earliest hunt clubs in coastal North Carolina, Currituck Shooting Club, was established in 1857, followed by others called Narrows Island, Monkey Island, Dews Island and Swan Island. Closer to Overhills were a group of hunt camps and lodges built in Guilford and Randolph Counties. The Lodge in Climax, North Carolina, was built in 1904 by General John Gill (of early Overhills development) and James Swan Frick of Baltimore. The property changed hands but remained an active hunt club until 1943. A large hunt club established by Jay Gould in the 1920s was located in lower Guilford County that was said to have stables, kennels and other buildings. Clarence Hungerford McKay also built a substantial lodge near Jamestown, North Carolina, that was designed by McKim, Mead and White. Neither of these two large clubs is intact; instead, smaller hunt clubs have survived, including a lodge near Whitsett, North Carolina, and another lodge that was converted into the Sedgefield Country Club. The hunt club property that resembles the large hunting acreage of Overhills in the 1920s was a turn-of-the-century 2,300-acre hunting estate owned by William Gould Brokow. Brokow hunted his property, as well as an additional 30,000 acres of private property for which he had hunting agreements. The main house burned in 1921 and Gould sold the property in 1938.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Hood, 19-20.

Overhills was not just a hunt club, it also became a family estate for the Percy Avery Rockefeller family and heirs. Similar properties held by other well-known industrialist families in North Carolina include the Vanderbilt Biltmore Estate in Asheville, which was completed in 1895 on 125,000 acres with all improvements at the grandest scale. The R.J. Reynolds, Jr. family also maintained their rural summer estate called Devotion in north central North Carolina. Richard Joshua Reynolds, Jr. and Elizabeth Dillard Reynolds developed this estate from an existing hunt camp from 1933 to 1939. The Reynolds' estate buildings utilized rustic-style construction and local materials that were reminiscent of the 1930s-era WPA programs.¹⁰⁴

While Overhills has much in common with these North Carolina hunt clubs and family retreats of the twentieth century, the property is unique because of the vernacular and designed landscapes that are intact on the property, in addition to the property's significant estate-era buildings. It is a surviving contiguous estate of 5,700 acres, owned and operated by the Percy Avery Rockefeller family heirs for 65 years, and retains the bridle trails, remnant hunt trails, field patterns and longleaf pine forests that were cultivated during the period of significance for the property from 1906 to 1938.

4. Designed Landscapes of Early-Twentieth Century Sandhills Estates

The designed landscape at Overhills includes the domestic landscape planting introduced at each building complex, the Donald Ross-designed golf course, and the intentional vistas and broad sight lines created within the overall layout of the buildings and recreational landscape, taking advantage of the inherent scenic qualities of the natural environment. It is unclear if a landscape architect designed the placement of the different building complexes with an eye for natural vistas and broad scenic qualities. However the hunt courses, bridle trails and spatial relationships within building complexes were fashioned, it took a gifted eye to blend the natural and introduced landscape so successfully.

The design of the 18-hole golf course by Donald Ross is also a significant designed landscape feature of the Overhills property. Ross designed 40 courses in North Carolina, including the Overhills Golf Course that is currently listed at 6,429 yards and par 71.¹⁰⁵ Built as much for position, rather than length, the golf course was also designed to augment the natural beauty of the Sandhills. Historian Daniel Webster, whose work focuses on pre-World War II golf courses, comments:

Following Ross' early renovation work, Overhills was among the very finest courses in the South. . . . This is hardly surprising, given both the well-chronicled advantages of the Sandhills country for golf and the fact that, according to Golf

¹⁰⁴ North Carolina Department of Transportation. Property Inventory and Evaluation for Devotion Rural Historic District. NCDOT Historic Architecture Group, May 2005.

¹⁰⁵ Lee Pace. "A Lost Ross Classic, Overhills 'At Ease' Behind Fort Bragg's Gates." *Carolinas Golf*, Winter 04-05.

Illustrated, *Ross was provided his choice of 3,500 acres and an unlimited budget.*¹⁰⁶

A nearby early twentieth century winter destination with landscape features similar to Overhills is the Village of Pinehurst. With blending of native and ornamental domestic landscaping and Pinehurst #2—a Donald Ross-designed course—the ambitious development ultimately encompassed 6000 acres, dating from an original 600-acre purchase in 1895 by James W. Tuft. Tufts hired the firm of Olmstead, Olmstead & Elliot to plan a scenic and relaxing village that would respect the existing topography of the site, avoiding grid patterns forced upon the undulating terrain. Early cottages were small traditional structures sited into the existing landscape, augmented with indigenous plants brought from surrounding swamps and cultivated on site. Over time the landscaping matured and softened the appearance of the village, including the pines that grew into the planned “Village Green,” thereby creating a feel of the native forest within the town itself.

Tufts hired Dr. D. Leroy Culver to design a nine-hole golf course on 60 acres south of the village; by 1899 a clubhouse was completed and the course was expanded to 18 holes. In 1900, Donald Ross was hired to rework and expand the golf course; in 1901 Pinehurst #2 was opened. The construction and maintenance of Pinehurst #2 was likely a similar process to that undertaken at the Overhills Golf Course.

*[Pinehurst] was all done by hand, and with horse and mule drawn carts, wagons and apparatuses. Using a variation of what was called the King Road Drag, they created the fairways. The adjustable blade would smooth the surface. A drag pan was used for scooping out bunkers and surfacing greens, and a harrow was used to remove roots. The courses followed the lay of the land, and consisted mostly of small built-up clay tees and holes with a few feet of flattened clay around the hole. Boxes of sand were placed at each hole so that a small pile of it could be used to create a tee. Putting greens were made of sand and clay. They were rolled every morning, and sprinkled with water carried in barrels on horse-drawn wagons. Some greens were even oiled. The moisture evaporated quickly, leaving a firm surface like a billiard table, and also drained quickly in the event of rain. After play, caddies standing nearby would take a large square of carpet scrap attached to a rope, and smooth the green by dragging the carpet around the surface.*¹⁰⁷

The Overhills golf course is significant as a strikingly attractive and largely intact example of the work of Donald Ross. Due in large part to its isolation from commercial golf as a Rockefeller family course, the original design integrity of the course has been retained where many other North Carolina Ross courses have been substantially altered.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Audrey Moriarity. “Pinehurst Beginnings,”

<http://www.themooreexchange.com/moore/Moore_County_&_Sandhills_History/Pinehurst.htm>, 2004.

5. Horticulture from the Postbellum South to the Early Twentieth Century

The J. Van Lindley Nursery was one of a handful of large nurseries that figured prominently in the emergence of Southern agriculture after the Civil War. The company supplied grapevines and assorted fruit and nut trees to farmers, commercial orchards, and vineyards throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The Lindley Family, of the J. Van Lindley Nursery established at Overhills from 1911 to 1932, established a nursery in the 1840s in Chatham County, North Carolina. In 1851 the founder Joshua Lindley moved the business to western Guilford County, to the Quaker community of New Garden. Lindley and his son John Van Lindley opened a new business in 1866 under the name of New Garden Nursery, Joshua Lindley & Son. Again reorganized in 1877-1878 as Pomona Hill Nurseries by John Van Lindley, the nursery purchased a large tract of land that would eventually be served by a railroad station (later serving the Southern Railway) named “Pomona” after the nursery. By 1899, the company incorporated its prosperous business, the J. Van Lindley Nursery Company, with J. Van as president and his son Paul Cameron Lindley as vice-president.¹⁰⁸

By the turn of the century, the flourishing Lindley nursery owned large amounts of property in Greensboro, Moore County, and Forsyth County. This would soon include the acreage the nursery would purchase along Jumping Run Creek for its Overhills branch nursery. By the closing of its doors in 1932, the Lindley’s branch nursery at Overhills encompassed 1,224 acres. The Rockefellers purchased the property in 1932 and Isabel Rockefeller opened a short-lived health clinic for children in one of the former nursery buildings. The company closed its doors in the 1960s; its nursery operations, including fields and buildings, in Guilford County are largely gone including a portion of the company’s lands that were sold to the Greensboro Airport.¹⁰⁹ Over time the former nursery fields at Overhills were converted to farmland and the Jumping Run Creek rerouted to the side of the fields. However, the fields remain today along with the largely intact collection of nursery buildings.

The Lindley Nursery Complex at Overhills is significant for being the oldest surviving and most intact collection of resources from the J. Van Lindley Nursery Company.

PART II. PHYSICAL INFORMATION

A. Property Overview

The Overhills Historic District is a 5,700-acre contiguous property owned and managed by Fort Bragg Military Reservation as a holding of the United States Department of the Army, Department of Defense. The historic district is the focus of this study. The 5,700-acre historic district is a smaller portion of the 10,580-acre Overhills tract that was

¹⁰⁸ Mattson, 46.

¹⁰⁹ Mattson, 47.

purchased by the Department of the Army in 1997. This Overhills tract is only a portion of the area that once comprised the hunt club and later the Rockefeller estate in the 1920s and 1930s.

The property features a historic network of sand roads crossing expanses of pine forest and former horse pastures and agricultural fields laced with small streams and drainage ways. Building complexes dating largely from the 1920s to the 1960s are located on six different sites, with all but two areas clustered on the west side of Highway 87 and south of Overhills Lake. A historic 18-hole golf course spreads out on the west side of the main complex of buildings, known as the Hill. As a large contiguous estate with relatively few building complexes, Overhills retains its historic and vernacular organization of roads, forests, former agricultural fields, and building placement.

The largely intact building complexes exhibit defined interior access roads, historic and non-historic ornamental landscaping, and clear indications of former land uses. Longleaf pine forest is being re-established within the historic district by active forestry management including prescribed burning. Former agricultural fields are in varying stages of reforestation, as are sections of the Overhills golf course.

The majority of the historic buildings, structures and landscape features constructed at Overhills from 1906 to 1938 have remained intact at their original locations. Most of the original circulation patterns and designed vistas on the property remain intact, including pine allées, privet hedges, paired specimen trees and the paired concrete columns at the Great Circus. The vast network of unpaved estate roads at Overhills retains historic widths of approximately 10 to 12 feet wide. Although the location of estate roads at the Hill have evolved over time as new cottages have been built and club-era buildings removed, the basic pattern of the semi-circular access drive at the Hill remains intact.

The Overhills site is remarkably buffered from surrounding land uses that are incompatible with its current and historic setting; very few modern intrusions are visible from the boundaries of the Overhills property. Natural systems, including upland forest and bottomland vegetation and swamps, are character-defining features of the Overhills landscape. Fort Bragg and previous land managers have preserved large stands of longleaf pine forest that is a historic landscape feature of the Overhills property. As the agricultural use of the property has ceased, clearings and field margins of the property have become reforested. Several horse pastures still remain on the property. Views within the site, specifically views to and from the golf course and the Hill, are largely intact.

Historic building materials throughout the site, including the naturally surfaced estate roads, have been retained. Roads surfaced with sand, clay and gravel are a vernacular building material used throughout the site during all historic periods. Unpaved pathways adjacent to building sites include garden paths at the Hill that are currently grassed with brick borders. Prior to the sale of the property to the Department of the Army in 1997, the garden paths were carefully maintained sand surfaces.

The log hunting lodge, dating from the early twentieth century, and the club-era buildings on the estate exhibit fine vernacular workmanship, as evidenced by the use of stripped tree trunks for the porch supports of the servants' quarters on the Hill and at the Paul Lindley Cottage. These regional construction techniques are significant to the property. The architect-designed brick buildings on the estate, including the hunt stable and Croatan, exhibit high quality workmanship. Cork bricks survive at the site of the hunt stable, and asphalt bricks remain in the ruins of the hunt kennel.

Introduced plant material that dates from the 1920s and 1930s, such as specimen trees, paired American Holly Trees, privet hedges, pine allées, magnolias and boxwoods, still remain at the developed areas of the historic district. Ornamental vegetation from the early Croatan Club period is largely absent from the site, while the later Overhills Country Club and Overhills Farms, Inc. periods are well represented.

While there have been changes to the Overhills landscape due to change in ownership and land uses, the current property remains unchanged in that it still holds natural value for visitors. The feeling of Overhills' cultural landscape is most strongly realized by traversing the historic network of estate roads, passing through a variety of native habitat, such as the thick bottomlands and longleaf pine and wiregrass forests. With respect to the preservation of the natural systems and appearance of the natural landscape, the property retains its historic integrity of feeling.

Despite incremental changes to the Overhills landscape over time, the Overhills cultural landscape is strikingly intact and in fair to good condition. The greatest threat to the property's landscape resources is disuse.

B. Character Defining Features

1. Topography

Topography on the site consists largely of smooth rolling hills with elevations ranging from a low point of 185 feet above sea level (at the far southeastern quadrant of the site) to a high point of 343 feet above sea level (at the far west of the property along the county line). Topographic features of the site include the residential compound aptly named the Hill, situated on a high point at 197 feet above sea level that provides nice views of the golf course to the west. The golf course itself was strategically designed and located to take best advantage of the undulating terrain and scenic views provided by the rolling topography at Overhills; the highest point on the golf course is 267 feet above sea level. The lowlands along Jumping Run Creek, planted by the J. Van Lindley Nursery and then later the Overhills Land Company, et al., are some of the lowest elevations on the site. The poor drainage of this area is evident by the excessive flooding and draining problems on the site today.

2. Natural Systems / Site Ecology

The Overhills property is located in the northwestern edge of the Sandhills District, a biogeographical region in south central North Carolina situated between the rolling hills of the Central Piedmont and the flat Coastal Range. The region is characterized by pine-forests, gently rolling hills, sandy soils, well-drained upland ridges, and numerous low areas that collect water and provide important wetland drainages.

Overhills is located in the Cape Fear River Drainage Basin. The primary source of hydrologic input is from surface water drainage from Jumping Run Creek and Muddy Creek as the principal streams on the Overhills property, as well as numerous small streams crossing the property. Jumping Run Creek flows from north to southeast on the eastern side of the ridgeline marked by Highway 87, and Muddy Creek flows from the northwest to the southeast on the western side of the ridgeline marked by Highway 87. Both creeks flow to the Lower Little River located south of the Overhills property. Both creeks are assigned North Carolina stream water classifications of “C”, meaning that their best use is for “aquatic life propagation and survival, fishing, wildlife, secondary recreation and agriculture.”¹¹⁰ The Lower Little River flows into the Cape Fear River located approximately 20 kilometers west of the Overhills tract. The small streams on the property have very narrow or nonexistent wetlands or floodplains, while the largest streams are often swampy on their borders.

Modern climate is characterized by mild winters and hot summers. State climatologist research indicates that the Sandhills region of North Carolina (and South Carolina) experiences more severe thunderstorms in the summer than those immediately surrounding areas.¹¹¹

The soils at Overhills are a mixture of sand, clay and silt, or largely sand. The well drained to dry soils of the Sandhills are poorly suited for many types of agriculture, while the low areas and wetlands can sustain greater plant variety and crop cultivation, such as in the lowlands at Jumping Run Creek. Native vegetation in the lowland areas at Overhills is more varied and includes Dogwood (*Cornus florida*), Huckleberry (*Gaylussacia dumosa*), Greenbriar (*Smilax species*), Wax Myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*), Blackgum (*Nyssa sylvatica*), River Cane (*Arundinaria gigantea*), Blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus*), Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*), and Holly (*Ilex species*). Some of the animal and plant species of the area are also federally listed as endangered species, such as the red-cockaded woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*), Saint Frances’ satyr (*Neonympha michelli francisci*), American chaffseed (*Schwalbea americana*), Michaux’s sumac (*Rhus michauxii*), and rough leaved loose strife (*Lysimachia asperulaefolia*).

¹¹⁰ State of North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources, *Classifications and Water Quality Standards Assigned to the Waters of the Cape Fear River Basin*, Environmental Management Commission, Raleigh, NC, August 2000.

¹¹¹ State Climate Office of North Carolina. Scientists Study Why More Storms Form in the Sandhills in Summer. July 5, 2001. <http://www.nc-climate.ncsu.edu/climate/sandhills.html>.

Naturally adaptable to the dry, sandy soil of the region are the native longleaf pine tree (*Pinus palustris*), wiregrass (*Aristida stricta*) and turkey oak (*Quercus laevis*). Not only suitable to the soil, these plant species are also well suited to the natural cycle of forest fires of this area. Specifically, the longleaf pine seedlings require debris to be cleared from the ground surface prior to germination. The bark of the longleaf pine is fire-resistant. The natural ecosystem of the Sandhills area is shaped and retained by the fires that serve to sustain the open grasslands that are characteristic of the Sandhills. Fires, historically started from lightning strikes or Native Americans, are now managed with careful precision in modern controlled-burns that promote native plant and animal species.

Longleaf pine forests of the Sandhills were utilized for naval stores, turpentine production, and timber beginning in the colonial period. By the late nineteenth century, many of the longleaf pine forests were clear-cut due to the development of large-scale commercial timbering. Such was the case with the Overhills property, which was sold to the Consolidated Lumber Company in 1892 and that conceivably cut over portions of the property before selling it to William Johnston in 1901.¹¹² The acres of longleaf pine trees on the Overhills property are significant because they represent a species that historically made up some of the most extensive forest trees in the southern United States.

The natural systems of the Overhills Historic District are generally healthy. In fact, many of the current land management practices of the current owner, Fort Bragg, are beneficial to the particular needs of the natural system at Overhills. Several examples of this good land stewardship are the efforts to preserve and maintain the longleaf pine-wiregrass landscape through prescribed burns and other practices; the conservation of endangered species habitat; and the restoration of Jumping Run Creek and the subsequent restoration of the surrounding wetlands.

3. Spatial Organization and Existing Patterns of Land Use

The overall spatial organization of the Overhills Historic District is much the same as it was during its period of significance, although the land uses associated with the property have since been altered or abandoned. Formalized vehicular circulation around the site is fairly extensive and includes primary and secondary paved roads and unpaved estate roads of varying condition and accessibility.

Three general character areas have been identified within the Overhills landscape. These areas were identified during analysis of historic land use activities and provide a manageable means of documenting and describing the myriad character-defining features that contribute to the integrity of the Overhills landscape. The three areas are comprised of 1) the recreational landscape, circulation system and agricultural landscape that historically wove together and supported the property both physically and financially and made it accessible to its users; 2) the primary developed areas of the Overhills estate

¹¹² Hood, 11.

including the Hill and golf course, Shops Complex, Entrance Compound, Overhills Lake, and Hunt Stable Complex; and 3) the J. Van Lindley Nursery and associated fields located along Jumping Run Creek.

a. Recreational Landscape, Circulation System and Agricultural Landscape

The recreational landscape of the estate is spatially connected and, by its nature, often overlapping. This landscape is connected via paved primary roads, unpaved estate roads, former bridle trails and hunt courses, golf links, watercourses and field margins. The alignment and existence of some of the secondary estate roads have evolved over time as they are absorbed by wetlands, eroded, or altered to create firebreaks.

Few vestiges of recognizable hunt courses remain at Overhills except where they have been specifically maintained, such as the pine allée at the Hunt Stable Complex. This enticing landscape element designed in association with fox hunts of the 1920s and 1930s evokes a luxurious moment in Overhills history. Although fox hunting fell out of favor at Overhills in the late 1930s and 1940s, the pine allée was maintained as a bridle trail. It is likely that other bridle trails were established along hunting courses as well. Analysis of the current Fort Bragg road system and the Rockefeller family bridle trail map indicates that many of the trails survive today as estate roads.¹¹³ Therefore, it can be deduced that the hunting courses of seventy-five years ago have either disappeared into the landscape, or were likely incorporated into what is recognized today as the estate road system.

The evolution of circulation routes and the landscapes of recreation and agriculture at Overhills is not a modern phenomenon. Managers throughout the twentieth century history of the Overhills property have applied constant vigilance and significant human and financial resources to maintain the landscapes' more designed, and refined, features. Records of the Overhills Land Company of the 1920s and 1930s show substantial numbers of laborers were required to maintain horse pasture, agricultural fields, roads, hunt trails, and club grounds. In short, while the natural setting of the property provided a backdrop of subtle and beguiling beauty to the hunt club, it was with significant resources that the recreational amenities of the property were maintained within such a vibrant natural setting.

b. Overhills Developed Area

The developed areas of the Overhills Historic District, along with any designed domestic landscapes, are still readily discernable for their intended function, such as the sand estate roads, passenger and freight stations, fenced paddocks, Overhills Lake swimming area, service and support buildings, and club-era cottages and homes. The riding stable and polo barn at the Entrance Compound continue to reflect their function as equestrian facilities, as does the hunt stable at the Hunt Stable Complex. Only the hunt kennel and

¹¹³ Elliman, mid-1970s.

the Great Circus have lost their integrity as a hunt club era landscape. The ceremonial landscape element of the Great Circus, located between the hunt stable and the hunt kennels, is now identifiable only by the four pairs of concrete piers, the pine allée with its pair of concrete piers, and the peripheral evergreen plantings around the edges of the once-circular arena.

Vegetative changes to the paddocks of the equestrian facilities at Overhills include the slow encroachment of successional growth and its associated grasses and wildflowers. This type of emerging overgrowth includes longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*) and loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*) seedlings; hardwood seedlings, such as (*Quercus velutina*), turkey oak (*Quercus laevis*) and scrub oak (*Quercus ilicifolia*); Broomsedge (*Andropogon species*); purple lovegrass (*Eragrostis spectabilis*), ragweed (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*), goldenrod (*Solidago species*), asters (*Aster species*), joe-pye weed (*Eupatorium fistulosum*), wiregrass (*Aristida stricta*), muscadine (*Vitis rotundifolia*), and smilax (*Smilax species*).

The railroad corridor cuts through the historic center of the Overhills property. Despite having had its rails removed, the corridor retains its straight alignment and easy grade from the Entrance Compound to its embankment on the west side of Overhills Lake, making an easily identifiable feature on the landscape. Although the Hill area has undergone some of the more dramatic changes of the property with the addition and removal of buildings from the 1940s through the 1960s, it is a remarkable place of shaded homes and subtle views. It is vibrant with the sounds and smells of a dynamic natural environment. The existing buildings are currently unused except for military personnel occasionally residing at Bird Song. One caveat to the existing beauty of the Hill is the stark contrast provided by the chain link and barbed wire fence placed around most of the buildings on the Hill since the Army's purchase of the property in 1997. The fence, installed to protect and preserve the property, has the unintentional effect of disturbing the historic visual relationships that once connected the cottages, roads and sightlines within the Hill.

The Entrance Compound, once a hub of activity with arrivals and departures from Overhills by train and car, is an abandoned but intact collection of eleven buildings accessible from Nursery Road by an estate road and connected to the Hill by another gravel drive leading west. The Entrance Compound includes a hunting lodge that dates to the earliest period of the hunt club era; a riding stable and polo barn with associated outbuildings and fenced paddocks; and a separate passenger and freight station. Forests of mixed pine and hardwood, a significant stand of southern magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*) on the north side of the polo barn, pasture, and encroaching wetlands from Muddy Creek surround the complex.

North of the Entrance Compound, marked by a small area of landscaping, is the former Lillington Road that turns eastward to access the Overhills Lake and dam. Created by damming Muddy Creek with an earthen berm in the late-nineteenth century, Overhills Lake features a picnic and swimming area that overlooks the lake and its bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) swamps. A concrete dam with steel gates was built in 1938 to

augment the earthen dam; these structures and a brick bathhouse are still intact on the site. A concrete bridge over Muddy Creek is located directly below the dam.

Much of the domestic landscape plantings surrounding the cottages and homes on the Hill reflect historic plant varieties used on site. Surviving historic plant specimens throughout the residential compound and areas adjacent include American holly (*Ilex opaca*), Burford Holly (*Ilex cornuta* 'Burfordii'), Japanese Holly (*Ilex crenata*), Heller Japanese Holly (*Ilex crenata* 'Helleri'), Boxwood (*Buxus species*), Pine (*Pinus species*), Southern Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*), Live Oak (*Quercus virginiana*), Sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*), Juniper (*Juniperus species*), Dogwood (*Cornus florida*), Nandina (*Nandina domestica*), Japanese Privet (*Ligustrum japonicum*), Amur River Privet (*Ligustrum obtusifolium*), Winter Honeysuckle (*Lonicera fragrantissima*), Japanese Camellia (*Camellia japonica*), Sasanqua Camellia (*Camellia sasanqua*), Border Forsythia (*Forsythia x intermedia*), and Japanese Euonymus (*Euonymus japonicus*).

There are overgrown remnants of Croatan's gardens on the north and south side of the house; the once carefully manicured sand garden paths are now grass. The garden path that extends from Croatan to Sycamore is bordered by bricks submerged in the earth; some of these brick edges are being lost to the overgrowing planting beds and accumulated soil.

Of the eighteen-hole golf course that was once a crown jewel in the Overhills landscape, it remains intact in an overgrown state. With the 9th hole terminating at the foot of Harriman Cottage at the Hill, the golf course provides a naturally scenic open view from the Hill. The golf course is traced by a network of estate roads or former golf cart trails, some of which are no longer easily accessible by vehicle due to erosion. The golf course features lovely views of the surrounding longleaf and loblolly pine forests, as well as vistas back to the Hill and down to Croatan Pond from its dramatic ridges. The western side of the golf course is accessible from the estate road that forms the western boundary of the Overhills Historic District.

A complex of former shops and support buildings is located on the north side of the Hill and the golf course, hidden by a stand of pine trees along a small creek. The complex consists of two workers cottages and service and maintenance facilities required by the Overhills estate. Several access roads connect the shops complex to the golf course and to the Hill. The complex is unused except for storage and occasional military training exercises.

c. Lindley Nursery Complex

The former J. Van Lindley Nursery, located on the north side of Highway 87 along Jumping Run Creek, features two operational complexes linked by a sequence of former nursery fields and winding unpaved farm roads along the bottomlands of the creek. Nursery Road, an asphalted striped highway, dissects the former Lindley Nursery property. The road historically provided access to the railroad and freight station at

Overhills where nursery plants were shipped to market. The grouping and placement of the nursery buildings on the south side of Nursery Road, referred to in this study as the Lindley Nursery Complex South, recalls a centralized agricultural operation that evolved from nursery plants to hay to tobacco to swine over the years. The complex retains a definable vernacular work yard and retains a variety of features that are reflective of the historic use of the land for agriculture. These features include a house built for the Lindley Nursery manager, a garage, equipment and weighting sheds, four workers' houses, a pump house, an oil house, a feed barn, and tobacco barns.

The Lindley Nursery Complex North is more remote and reflects less intensive agricultural use after the close of the nursery in the early 1930s. The Paul Cameron Lindley cottage is intact and features the vernacular tree trunk columns on its porch. The historic spatial arrangement of buildings and structures at the Lindley Nursery Complex North site is intact and includes two workers' houses, a granary and shop, hay barn, pack house, pump house, and equipment shed. The historic view from the Paul Cameron Lindley cottage to the adjacent nursery fields has been obscured by forest.

The two Lindley Nursery complexes are abandoned except for limited military training utilizing some of the buildings that are non-contributing to the historic district. The nursery fields are no longer used for agriculture, although the fields on the north side of Nursery Road are the location of a stream bank realignment and restoration. Jumping Run Creek and its tributaries are being restored to their natural placement; this restoration will return the adjacent areas to their natural wetland habitat.

Most of the historic land uses for the property no longer exist due to the current ownership of the property. These activities included golfing, horseback riding, guest housing, entertainment, and agricultural cultivation. Exceptions to these changes in land use are the current use of the property for recreational fishing on Overhills Lake and Croatan Pond, as well as the functional circulation network on site. The hundreds of miles of sand roads at Overhills, consisting of historic estate roads and former bridle trails, are still the primary access through and within the Overhills property for visitors and military personnel alike.

4. Circulation

The circulation system associated with the present day Overhills cultural landscape is made up of a modern state highway (NC Highway 87), a primary estate road (SR 1117/Nursery Road), unpaved estate roads, riding trails, walking paths, an abandoned railroad corridor, wooden boardwalks, and informal unpaved parking areas. The many streams and wetlands at Overhills provide much of the framework for the property's circulation system and land uses due to the limitations inherent in crossing streams and cultivating and improving inadequately drained soils.

NC Highway 87 is a divided four-lane highway that dissects the Overhills property into two unequal halves while traveling north to south. The vast majority of the traffic that

uses this road continues through the Overhills Historic District, traveling to or from the Fort Bragg/Fayetteville area. This road is also known as the Old Western Plank Road that extended from Fayetteville to Winston-Salem. Nursery Road intersects with Highway 87 at a diagonal and extends from the former Lindley Nursery Complex in the northeastern quadrant of the property, crosses the former railroad bed to the southeast of the Hill, and continues through the southwestern quadrant of the property ending at Vass Road. Nursery Road acts as the spine of the historic property, providing access to the Hill and the Hunt Stable Complex from Vass Road and to the Lindley Nursery Complex sites and Jumping Run Creek. North of Highway 87, Nursery Road is paved with asphalt and functions as a public road. The section of Nursery Road running south of Highway 87 to Vass Road remains as the primary access to the Overhills Historic District. The road has only limited accessibility to the public and is maintained by Fort Bragg as a gravel and sand road.

The “estate” roads of the Overhills Historic District—that is, the historic access roads, farm roads, former bridle trails, and the modern roads introduced to the property—are all unpaved roads, either surfaced in gravel, indigenous sand or fill sand, and are of varying widths. Crunching gravel, vibrating “washboard”, the pull of irregular sandy soil surfaces, and eroded roadbeds all result in slow moving, and sometimes inaccessible, roadways on the property. A soft carpet of pine needles provides an additional surface on roads through pine forest, while other roads have succumbed to spreading wetlands and have started to disappear. The majority of the historic estate roads are minor thoroughfares that are 10 to 20 feet wide. The wider roads in the district include Nursery Road and Old Pinehurst Road that are 20+ feet wide.

The historic road system is largely intact. Many of the estate roads date to at least the early part of the twentieth century, such as the former Lillington Road that crosses the bridge at Muddy Creek near the Overhills Lake and Dam and continues eastward. The Old Pinehurst Road extends from the golf course through the southwestern quadrant of the property and continues beyond the boundaries of the historic district north of Vass Road. Of particular note are the surviving pine allées that exist on the property, including the pine allée on the golf course between Holes 10 and 11, as well as the pine allée flanking the entrance drive to the Hill. The cart trails on the golf course also function as roads, although many are currently impassable due to erosion or blockage by fallen trees.

The primary road providing access from Nursery Road to the Entrance Compound and the Hill retains its historic alignment adjacent to the railroad. However, what has changed since the club era is the vehicular route that brought cars from Highway 87 to Nursery Road. Historically, a visitor’s route by car was to take Highway 87 north, turning east on an estate road (called Kennel Road) that led past the Hunt Stable Complex and Great Circus before intersecting with Nursery Road. Although Kennel Road is still open and accessible from the interior of the estate, the access point for the road at Highway 87 has been closed.

Also notable at the Entrance Compound is the entrance drive to the riding stable, which was also used as an equestrian route. The front drive is on axis with the center of the stable and is lined with privet; the effect of this drive, when groomed, is striking in its visual composition.

New roads have been added to the property over time for various reasons. For example, one historic estate road (viewed on the 1938 aerial) originally provided primary access to the Lindley fields from Nursery Road on the south side of Jumping Run Creek; currently, there are remnants of a dilapidated wooden bridge across the creek and adjacent nursery operation buildings along the remaining road. However, at some point another road was constructed that directly parallels the fields and allows direct access from Nursery Road without crossing the creek. Other roads have been constructed as fire breaks for use during prescribed burns. This practice of creating fire breaks is not a new one; the Elliman bridle trail map includes a ride named “Big Fire Break” on the west side of the Overhills property.

Formalized vehicular parking at Overhills is scarce and consists primarily of an area demarcated with railroad ties next to the passenger station in the Entrance Compound, informal parking at the homes and cottages at the Hill, and within individual garages provided at Croatan, Harriman Cottage and other former residences. However, none of these garages are currently utilized for parking; instead, parking is a choice that is left up to the individual.

The railroad corridor itself was a primary historic transportation corridor into and out of the property, providing both visitor access and the movement of supplies and goods from the estate. The tracks have been removed from the railroad corridor and the raised embankment is identifiable as it travels through the pine forests and weaves its way into the Entrance Compound and beyond the fringes of the Overhills property. North of the Hill, the former railroad corridor acts as a dam for the west side of the Overhills Lake. To the north of the Hill, the railroad embankment is significantly taller than the surrounding ground and introduces an interesting built structure to the landscape.

Walking paths on the Overhills property include a two- and one-half mile nature trail and boardwalk system around the perimeter of Overhills Lake, as well as a deteriorated wooden boardwalk at Croatan Pond. The gardens at Croatan provide leisurely movement between Croatan and Sycamore, as well as pleasurable informal strolls. The surfaces of garden walks consist of patchy grass outlined by landscaped beds and brick borders. Brick paths and patios are present at most of the cottages at the Hill. Bricks made of cork are used at the hunt stable, and remnants of Airedale asphalt bricks can be found in the ruins of the dog runs at the hunt kennel. Other pedestrian circulation at the Hill, and within other built areas, consists of desire lines and undelineated pedestrian use areas.

Limited water circulation is provided by the Overhills Lake for fishing and recreation.

In summary, the existing circulation network at Overhills reflects a high level of integrity by retaining the historic alignments of roads and the railroad corridor, former bridle trail paths, and informal pedestrian circulation areas. The 10 to 20 foot wide sand and clay estate roads are intact, with gravel added only on the most traveled areas to assist in stabilization. Although the railroad tracks have been removed from the railroad corridor, the former railroad remains a distinctive landscape feature that is clearly recognizable by its mild grade and raised embankment. The bridle trails that were so well used by the Rockefeller family remain largely intact on the estate today; the majority of these trails are currently cataloged as roads within the Fort Bragg GIS database. The Hill features a grassed pedestrian pathway in the garden on the north side of Croatan. This pathway was originally a garden path that terminated at the end of the garden at Croatan; the pathway did not lead from Croatan to Covert Cottage. After Covert Cottage was demolished and Sycamore was constructed during the 1950s, the garden path created a pedestrian linkage between the two buildings. The existing garden path retains its historic width and alignment and features a historic brick border.

5. Vegetation

Current vegetation at Overhills reflects a variety of factors, including topography and hydrology; current and historic land uses; and ongoing forest management practices. The upland vegetation of the property varies between expansive areas of restored longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*) and wiregrass (*Aristida stricta*) habitat; mixed pine/oak forest; scrub pine; and previously cleared areas in various stages of second-growth woodlands. The Overhills property is significant within the Sandhills region because of its vast areas of restored longleaf pine and wiregrass communities resulting from the management practices of Overhills Farms, Inc. and Fort Bragg. As explained in the Fort Bragg Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan, up to 95-98% of the Sandhills and coastal area historically featuring this native longleaf pine ecosystem has been lost.¹¹⁴ This plant community is dependent on a cycle of fire and re-growth to sustain itself.

The Overhills property also features mixed-pine forest. Common trees of this forest include loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*), slash pine (*Pinus elliottii*), and turkey oak (*Quercus laevis*). These forest areas are not currently maintained through prescribed burns, and some are abandoned fields that have reforested in second growth.

Native vegetation at Overhills is markedly different in its bottomlands along small stream channels, drainage areas and swamps. A greater diversity of hardwoods and shrubs proliferate in these wet areas and swamps, such as Overhills Lake and surrounding swamp. A sighting of river cane (*Arundinaria gigantea*), such as that on the southern hill leading down to Croatan Pond, alerts to the presence of water; other bottomland vegetation includes bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*), sweet gums (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), tuliptrees (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), cedar (*Cedrus*

¹¹⁴ Griffin Social Technologies, Inc. Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan for Fort Bragg, Camp Mackall, and Simmons Army Airfield. July 2001.

species), blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*), sweetbay (*Magnolia virginiana*), and inkberry (*Ilex glabra*).

Fort Bragg GIS data includes a partial survey, completed in 2000, that provides a general overview of the plant communities in the western part of the Overhills Historic District (Figure 36).

In contrast to the subtle beauty of Overhills' forests and wetlands, the building complexes at Overhills feature intentional plantings of both native and introduced plant species with the purpose of heightening the natural landscape for visitors. Although both deciduous and evergreen plantings are present in the Overhills designed landscapes, the majority of the vegetation is evergreen to provide the maximum visual contrast to the winter landscape at Overhills. Although there is some variety in these introduced plantings, a definite design palette is recognizable at Overhills that consists of magnolia (*Magnolia species*), hollies (*Ilex species*), azaleas (*Rhododendron species*), and privet (*Ligustrum species*). Particularly, the Harriman Cottage, riding stable and hunt stable all feature paired American Holly (*Ilex opaca*) flanking the front entrances.

The Hill is the most lavishly planted area of the estate, featuring blooming gardens at Bird Song and Croatan, brick lined paths, and domestic landscaping for all of the cottages. The cottages at the Hill are scattered in a rough semi-circle generally facing the sand access road and the golf course beyond. The largest cottages are Croatan and Bird Song, which face one another at the two ends of the semi-circle with portions of Hole No. 1 and No. 9 between them. The vegetation at the Hill provides a visually appealing, lush evergreen environment within the greater pine forest. Specimen trees on the site include Sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*), Juniper (*Juniperus species*), Live Oak (*Quercus virginiana*), Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*), American Holly (*Ilex opaca*) and Longleaf Pine (*Pinus palustris*).

Croatan sits amidst an informally designed landscape of undulating planting beds of azalea (*Rhododendron species*), camellia (*Camellia species*), privet (*Ligustrum species*), crape myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*), japanese ligustrum (*Ligustrum japonicum*), nandina (*Nandina domestica*), japanese holly (*Ilex crenata*), chinese holly (*Ilex cornuta*) and boxwood (*Buxus species*). The front patio of the house is accessible from an unpaved circular drive down a short series of brick steps inset into a low brick retaining wall. A garden on the north side of the house features a wide path, lined with brick leaders, extending from the landing of the brick stairs to the side patio of Sycamore. A path also leads away to the southeast and flows into the rear lawn of Croatan, adjacent to a back patio. Following a substantial retaining wall down the hill toward Croatan garage, a former circular drive is evident at the rear of Croatan. On the south side of the house a wide flagstone terrace steps down to a grassed lawn surrounded on two sides by planting beds.

Cherokee and Sycamore are sited in thick landscaping between Croatan and Harriman Cottage on the former site of the Covert cottage, an early Rockefeller residence.

Sycamore is aptly named as it has several specimen sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*) trees in the area. Particularly significant at Cherokee is the remnant of an historic entry drive from the main access road on the Hill. Two specimen juniper (*Juniperus species*) trees and one historic boxwood (*Buxus species*) hedge marks all that is left of the original entrance drive to the Covert cottage, as visible in historic photos of the site.

Harriman Cottage is separated from the former golf course by abelia (*Abelia species*), privet (*Ligustrum species*) and azalea (*Rhododendron species*) hedges and two large pine (*Pinus species*) trees. Two large American hollies (*Ilex opaca*) flank the front door and ground cover creates an undulating bed edge around both sides of the house. An almost impenetrable bed of azaleas, hollies, nandina, and privet extends from the north side of the cottage. A circular drive continues around the back of the house and a brick walk, partially buried, extends from the rear door of the cottage.

Bird Song, a modern addition to the Hill in 1963, features extensive plantings of a similar palette to the rest of the Hill, including magnolia (*Magnolia species*), hollies (*Ilex species*), azalea (*Rhododendron species*), privet (*Ligustrum species*), dogwood (*Cornus florida*), juniper (*Juniperus species*), boxwood (*Buxus species*), and nandina (*Nandina domestica*). A large patio and two raised brick circular planting beds are on the south side of the building, originally facing Hole No. 1 of the golf course.

The Overhills Golf Course is overgrown with dog fennel (*Anthemis cotula*), volunteer pine (*Pinus species*) trees, remnants of crape myrtles (*Lagerstroemia indica*) and other decorative landscaping from Rockefeller ownership. The golf course has been burned over and, in some places, piles of trees and other vegetative refuse has been piled and burned. Dammed drainage ponds along the course are still intact for the most part. There are still wonderful views from the high ground on the course and the long historic pine allée between Hole No. 10 and No. 11 is remarkably intact.

East of the Hill, the entry to the Entrance Compound is marked by crape myrtles (*Lagerstroemia indica*) and a wooden fence between the railroad corridor and the main road. A fairly open view of the entrance road down to the freight station is possible. Thick forest of mixed pines, southern magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*), and bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) swamps are on the periphery of the site beyond the railroad tracks and the riding stable. The paddocks associated with the riding stable are being overtaken by wetlands adjacent to Muddy Creek, as is the connecting road from the Entrance Compound to the horse pasture to the east. A series of dogwoods (*Cornus florida*), interspersed with cypress (*Taxodium species*) and crape myrtles (*Lagerstroemia indica*), are planted on the west side of the former railroad embankment. The Entrance Compound features domestic landscaping around the majority of the buildings, including the passenger station, hunting lodge, and house behind the polo barn. Most of the landscaping in the compound is not historic, with the exception of plant material at the riding stable. An entry road to the riding stable is hedged with privet and American Hollies flank the entrance to the riding stable. There are specimen sweet gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) and magnolia (*Magnolia species*) trees in the rear yard and

remnants of a flower garden include garden phlox (*Phlox paniculata*), cannas (*Canna species*), and chrysanthemums (*Chrysanthemum species*).

Continuing on the road from the Entrance Compound, a triangular plot of land marks the turn to Overhills Lake and is landscaped with azalea (*Rhododendron species*). The lakefront features naturally occurring itea (*Itea virginica*) growing out of a wood retaining wall, as well as water lilies (*Nymphaea odorata*). Azaleas also add color to the area.

The Hunt Stable Complex is being closed in on all sides by a mixed pine forest; both the hunt kennel ruins and the west side of the Great Circus have been swallowed into the surrounding tree canopy. None of the openness of the landscape evident in early photographs of the site is intact. The hunt stable features a familiar use of evergreen material with the planting of American Holly (*Ilex opaca*) along the front and sides of the hunt stable. The remnants of the Great Circus include a grass area between the hunt stable and the ruins of the hunt kennel. A hedge of privet (*Ligustrum species*) and sumac (*Rhus copallina*) flourish in the middle of the grass area, as well as a singular large pine tree (*Pinus species*). Of the four pairs of concrete columns that make up the edges of the Great Circus, one of them is invisible behind a grove of volunteer pines (*Pinus species*) that have grown up on the west side of the grass area. There are no remnants of the privet hedges that once surrounded and defined the edges of the ceremonial Great Circus. Southern magnolias (*Magnolia grandiflora*) and American Hollies (*Ilex opaca*), some of significant age, are growing around the perimeter in a generally circular pattern; these trees are thought to be part of the original landscape beyond the perimeter of the Great Circus. The pine allée to the west of the Great Circus is intact from the eastern most pair of columns to Nursery Road. The direct access from the Great Circus to the allée has been filled in by the grove of volunteer pine trees mentioned earlier.

The Lindley Nursery Complex North and South have very little ornamental landscaping, in keeping with their utilitarian function. The Paul Lindley Cottage and the former nursery manager's house have remnants of historic plant materials in the vicinity, although both houses have non-historic foundation plantings. Plants of interest at Lindley Complex North include a mulberry tree (*Morus alba*) and a specimen Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*). At the Lindley Complex South, there are remnants of pear (*Pyrus species*) and pecan (*Carya illinoensis*) trees on the field margins south of the manager's house. Two specimen spruce (*Picea species*) trees are in the front yard and a pine allée is intact on the farm road between the former fields and the manager's house.

Old-field margins and estate roads on the Overhills property exhibit a variety of native plants growing on their edges, such as eupatorium (*Eupatorium species*), snakeroot (*Ageratina aromatica*), coreopsis (*Coreopsis species*), fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*), butterfly pea (*Clitoria ternatea*), dog fennel (*Anthemis cotula*), and blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus*). The butterfly pea likely escaped cultivation and is now propagating wildly.

Vegetation by its very nature is an evolving and growing feature of a cultural landscape. The building complexes at Overhills feature intentional plantings of both native and introduced plant species with the purpose of heightening the appearance of the natural landscape. Overhills' ornamental landscape plantings, both native and introduced, are intact in general form, color, appearance and location. A lack of pruning and careful landscape maintenance does not affect the integrity of the vegetation nor its ability to reflect the historic appearance of the ornamental landscape at Overhills.

The subtle beauty of Overhills' longleaf pine and wiregrass forests, mixed-pine, and hardwood/shrub bottomlands are intact throughout the Overhills estate, although the coverage of vegetation type has evolved over time due to natural growing cycles and changing management practices.

6. Water

Significant water features on the Overhills site include Overhills Lake, Muddy Creek, drainage areas on the golf course, Croatan Pond located south of the golf course, Deer Pen Lake, and Jumping Run Creek.

Overhills Lake lies on the eastern side of the raised railroad embankment, with the dam located on the south side of the lake. These two structures give the lake a somewhat rectangular shape. The raised railroad bed was constructed in the late nineteenth century when the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railroad was built through this swampy area. This railroad bed, in effect, acts as a dam on the western side of the lake. Muddy Creek flows from the lake to the southeast and past the riding stable. The dam is an earthen structure with steel and concrete gate; the gates and possibly the dam itself were rebuilt in 1938 by Avery Rockefeller. A small recreational area is located at the foot of the lake on the berm of the dam; a brick barbeque, grass lawn, and swimming area are still evident. A brick bathhouse is located immediately adjacent to the dam. The lake is circled by a two and one-half mile walking trail, including a non-historic wooden boardwalk constructed through a bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) swamp. The bald cypress trees on the edge of the lake provide an attractive and almost mystical effect with the unusual shape of the aerial root "knees" protruding from the highly reflective purple-hued water of the lake.

Croatan Pond, located south of the golf course, is dammed on the east side with a sand roadway that has partially collapsed. A wooden bird-viewing platform and boardwalk is located amidst the vegetation on the west side of the pond; however, the wooden structures are deteriorated and structurally unsound. The Rockefeller family used this pond as swimming and birding area.

Deer Pen Lake is located west of Highway 87 on the south side of Nursery Road. This small, dammed pond most recently provided a water source for the fallow deer raised by Overhills Farms, Inc. during the 1980s.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ Hood, 126.

Jumping Run Creek is currently undergoing a stream and wetland restoration project funded by the North Carolina Wetlands Restoration Program. Nine thousand and five hundred linear feet of stream and over 95 acres of wetlands in the immediate vicinity will be restored as part of this project, with the purpose of improving water quality and protecting stream bank habitat. An incidental result of the project will be to return Jumping Run Creek to its historic location meandering along the bottomland fields once cultivated by the J. Van Lindley Nursery. In the 1970s, Overhills Farms, Inc. diverted and straightened the creek to provide more arable land for the Overhills Land Company and Overhills Farms, Inc. Part of the re-channeling of the creek included digging additional drainage ditches and constructing tile drains to drain the field. The current restoration of Jumping Run Creek will create a more natural profile for the creek extending across the bottomland fields and will include native vegetation planted along the stream banks. Associated tributaries will also be restored and linked into the “new” alignment of Jumping Run Creek. Selective grading will restore natural wetlands in the peripheral areas.¹¹⁶

There are a few perennial streams and drainage areas along the golf course that have been dammed for several reasons: 1) to provide aesthetically pleasing peripheral vegetation and a contrasting backdrop to the fairways, and 2) to control runoff as part of the design of the storm water management system.

The Overhills golf course has an irrigation system that was mapped in the 1960s; the installation of the irrigation system itself dates prior to that time. The system was fed by Overhills Lake and required the use of pump houses located around the property. The irrigation system is currently non-operational.

7. Buildings and Structures

The buildings and structures at Overhills are largely intact, both individually and as groups, across the property. A majority of the buildings and structures date from the early twentieth century to mid-century and reflect the most significant years of the property’s development. Most of the buildings and structures at Overhills are documented in detail in the Mattson, Alexander and Associates *2000 Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report: Overhills Tract, Fort Bragg, Harnett and Cumberland Counties, North Carolina, Final Report*. Refer to the Mattson, Alexander and Associates 2000 report for detailed information about the built resources on the Overhills property.

The numbering system assigned by the authors of the Mattson study has been adopted by Fort Bragg as their cataloging number for buildings and structures on the property. Therefore, the buildings and resources listed below use this assigned number. The buildings and structures are also listed according to their location or general vicinity on the property. All of the buildings from the period of significance either contribute (C) to the significance of the Overhills cultural landscape or are considered non-contributing

¹¹⁶ BLUE Land Water Infrastructure. <<http://www.blwi.com>>, August, 2005.

(NC) due to age or condition. Estimated construction dates, included in the list, are taken from the Mattson study unless noted with a footnote.

Hunt Stable Complex:

1. Great Circus, C (early 1920s)
2. Hunt Stable, C (ca. 1924)
3. Hunt Stable Silo, C (ca. 1924)
4. Hunt Stable Garage, C (1930s)
5. Hunt Stable Residence No. 1, C (1920s)
6. Hunt Stable Residence No. 2, NC (1940s/remodeled 1980s)
7. Hunt Stable Residence No. 2, Garage, NC (1940s)
8. Hunt Stable Residence No. 2, Shed, NC (1940s)
9. Overhills Water Tank, NC (1969)¹¹⁷
10. Overhills Water Tank, Historic, C (ca. 1925)

Entrance Compound:

11. Hunting Lodge, C (ca. 1906; addition ca. 1960)
12. Overhills Passenger Station, C (ca. 1916)
13. Storage Building, NC (ca. 1980)
14. Pump House, C (ca. 1935)
15. Riding Stable, C (ca. 1922)
16. Riding Stable Garage, C (ca. 1935)
17. Riding Stable Feed Room, C (ca. 1935)
18. Polo Barn, C (early 20th century/1922 remodeling)
19. Polo Barn House, C (ca. 1922)
20. Polo Barn House, Garage, NC (1980s)
21. Freight Depot, C (ca. 1920)

Overhills Lake:

22. Overhills Lake, Dam and Gates (including wooden retaining wall / bulkhead at Overhills Lake), C (late 19th c. and early 20th c. / rebuilt 1938)
23. Lake Bathhouse, C (ca. 1920s)
24. Lake Pump House, NC (ca. 1963)
25. Lake Boathouse, NC (ca. 1950)
26. Bridge over Muddy Creek, NC (ca. 1960)
27. Railroad Bridge, C (ca. 1935)

Shops Complex:

28. Shop Garage No. 1, C (ca. 1935)
29. Fuel Storage Shed, C (ca. 1935)
30. Oil House/Formers Overhills Post Office, C (ca. 1920/moved probably ca. 1935)
31. Shop, C (ca. 1935)
32. Granary, C (ca. 1935)

¹¹⁷ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1924-006.

- 33. Equipment Shed, NC (ca. 1970)
- 34. Shop Garage No. 2, NC (ca. 1960s)
- 35. Woodworking Shop, NC (ca. 1950)
- 36. Worker House No. 1, C (ca. 1915-1918)
- 37. Worker House No. 1, Garage, C (ca. 1935)
- 38. Servant's House, C (ca. 1930)
- 39. Worker House No. 2, C (ca. 1918)
- 40. Mule Barn, C (ca. 1935)
- 41. Worker House No. 2, Wood Shed, NC (ca. 1950)
- 42. Worker House No. 2, Chicken House, NC (ca. 1950)

The Hill:

~~43. White Servants' Quarters (ca. 1913)~~

This c1913 wood-framed rustic-style cottage was destroyed by fire March 17, 2002.

- 44. Black Servants' Quarters, C (ca. 1913)
- 45. Laundry, C (ca. 1920)
- 46. Harriman Cottage, C (ca. 1918)
- 47. Harriman Cottage, Garage, C (ca. 1935)
- 48. Sycamore, NC (1949)
- 49. Cherokee, NC (1954-1955)
- 50. Estate Office and Manager's Residence, NC (ca. 1960)
- 51. Bus Shelter/Tennis Court Shed, NC (1940s/moved 1988)
- 52. Tennis Court, NC (ca. 1970)
- 53. Pump House, C (ca. 1935)
- 54. Croatan, C (1928-1929)
- 55. Croatan Garage, C (1928-1929)
- 56. Paddle Court, C (1929)
- 57. Bird Song, NC (1962-1963)
- 58. Bird Song Pump House, NC (ca. 1963)
- 59. Dog Kennel, NC (ca. 1970)
- 60. Golf Course, C (1913-1916)
- 61. Golf Course, Spectator Shelter, NC (ca. 1970s)

The Mattson study reported the shelter was constructed ca. 1916; later research found that the spectator shelter was constructed ca. 1970s rather than ca. 1916.

- 62. Skeet Range, NC (ca. 1960)
- 63. Lake, C (ca. 1916)
- 64. Pasture Stall, NC (ca. 1980)
- 65. Pasture Stall, NC (ca. 1980)
- 138. Shed, NC (ca. 1970)
- 139. Shed, NC (ca. 1970)
- 140. Shed, NC (ca. 1970)
- 141. Shed, NC (ca. 1970)

Lindley Nursery Complex, North:

- 69. Paul Cameron Lindley House, C (ca. 1918)

- 70. Nursery Worker House No. 1, C (ca. 1911)
- 71. Nursery Worker House No. 2, C (ca. 1911)
- 72. Granary/Shop, C (ca. 1920s)
- 73. Hay Barn, C (ca. 1920s)
- 74. Pack House, NC (ca. 1940)
- 75. Pump House, NC (ca. 1970)
- 76. Equipment Shed, C (ca. 1930)

Lindley Nursery Complex, South:

- 77. Nursery Manager's House, C (ca. 1911)
- 78. Pump House, C (ca. 1911)
- 79. Equipment Shed, NC (ca. 1980)
- 80. Oil House, NC (ca. 1974)
- 81. Feed Barn, C (ca. 1930)
- 82. Weighing/Loading Shed, NC (ca. 1970)
- 83. Sheds, NC (ca. 1970)
- 84. Garage/Stable, NC (ca. 1920/altered ca. 1976)
- 85. Nursery Worker House No. 4, C (ca. 1911)
- 86. Nursery Worker House No. 4, Garage, NC (ca. 1920s)
This garage has been crushed by a falling tree and, therefore, does not retain its integrity.
- 87. Nursery Worker House No. 4, Chicken House, C (ca. 1920s)
- ~~88. Nursery Worker House No. 3, NC (ca. 1911)~~
This building has fallen down and is in a ruinous state. For all purposes except salvage,
this building is gone.
- 89. Horse Stable, NC (ca. 1955)
- 90. Hog Pen, NC (ca. 1955)

Structures identified during the course of the landscape study that did not have assigned numbers include:

- A bridge across Jumping Run Creek located adjacent to the equipment shed (Building 76) west of Nursery Road. This wooden bridge has partially collapsed and is structurally unsound. NC (date of construction unknown)
- A horse barn at the former horse pasture north of the Entrance Compound. This large metal-sided barn stored hay and sheltered animals as needed. It is located at the bottom of a slope. NC (date of construction unknown)
- A hitching post is located at the Entrance Compound to the north of the access drive to the Hill. The structure is in good condition and is constructed of wood and has a shingled roof. NC (date of construction is unknown)

8. Small-Scale Elements

The following is an inventory of existing small-scale features on the Overhills property.

Fences:

Both historic and modern fencing exists on the Overhills property today. Historic fencing includes wooden post and rail fences around the horse paddocks at the Entrance Compound, the former horse pasture east of the Entrance Compound, and at the hunt stable paddock. Metal swinging gates are still intact on many of the fences. An iron fence latch on one of the fences in the entrance compound reads "D. Tendler Malvern P.A." Large sections of fencing are missing, and small sections of fencing have collapsed.

Remnants of historic iron fencing for the hunt kennel remain at the Hunt Stable Complex. Anchor Post Fence Company manufactured the iron fencing; the fencing currently reads "Anchor Post Iron Works." Some of the fencing dates to 1927; some of the remnant fencing for the dog runs on the east side of the kennel ruin were added in 1933.¹¹⁸ Many of the fence posts are still erected and grounded in concrete footings; however, only remnants of the attached iron fencing are intact.

A majority of the modern fencing on the property is either 1) chain-link with barbed wire fencing, 2) wood post and cable fencing, or 3) wood post and wire fencing that have been erected since the property was acquired by the Department of the Army in 1997. These modern fences have been erected to prevent access to certain areas of the property, or to preserve or protect historic resources and features on the Overhills site. Chain link fencing has been erected at the Hill and at the intersection of Nursery Road and the hunt stable access road. A wooden post and rail fence encircles a modern horse exercise machine in the middle of the northern-most horse paddock in the Entrance Compound. The threshold of the Entrance Compound features a short wooden post and rail fence that extends from the road to the former railroad corridor. A disassembled electrical entry gate, dating from the beginning of the Army ownership of the property, is located at the roadside with the card reader and electrical box still intact.

Signage:

The only remaining historic signs in the Overhills Historic District are the attached green enamel signboard on the passenger depot that reads "OVERHILLS" in white lettering, and the painted sign on the freight station that reads in black lettering "A.C.L.R.R. Freight Station."

Remaining signage on site consists of modern military signage and road markers; much of the signage is rectangular and brown with a white border. Most of the historic buildings have their own sign that read "Off Limits Historic Property."

Paired Columns:

Five pairs of concrete columns are present at the Hunt Stable Complex and are associated with the landscape feature, the Great Circus. Four of the pairs of columns are sited around a grassy area that was once used for jumping and parading horses and hounds. One pair of columns is integral to the brick wall at the entrance of the Hunt Stable; these

¹¹⁸ Overhills Archives, FBCRMP, OHD 1927-024, December 1927.

columns had double doors or gates attached to them that are now missing. Another pair of columns is located across the grass yard at the ruins of the hunt kennel; the columns are lined up on a north-south axis with the first pair. Another pair of columns is on an east-west axis. The columns on the west side of the yard functions as an entry into a pine allée; another, fifth, pair of columns is located approximately 455 feet west in the middle of the pine allée. Some of the columns still retain a rusted metal base for a scone or statue.

The riding stable at the Entrance Compound also has a pair of columns integral to its wooden entrance into the stable yard. These columns are made of wood and retain light fixtures on the top.

Utilities:

Electrical ground boxes remain on the Hill and were used for recharging golf carts.

Three existing fire hydrants are located in the area of the Hill using a 1961 utilities map as a base.¹¹⁹ These historic hydrants read “Murdock, Cincinnati.” The hydrants were manufactured by the Murdock Company—a company that has been in existence since 1853. The hydrants at Overhills are likely “yard hydrants” which could have hoses attached to them and would have originally had handles that could open and close the water supply.¹²⁰

Water meters located in the planting beds on the north side of the house read “Wards Peow (sic) Works, Water Meter, Fayetteville, NC.”

Retaining Walls:

The garden on the west side of Croatan features a low brick retaining wall with a series of low stairs. This retaining wall provides a landing to enter the house or the garden and also functions as the visual boundary for the garden on the west side. A large structural brick retaining wall is located on the northeast side of Croatan and retains the hill on the north side of Croatan.

A wooden retaining wall or floodwall is still apparent on the east side of the dam gates at Overhills Lake. The retaining wall appears to be made of wooden 2 X 4s stacked on end. The wall is in deteriorated condition.

¹¹⁹ Overhills Farms Irrigation System No. 9 Fairway, January 1961. Southern Irrigation Company, Charlotte, North Carolina. Overhills Archives, Fort Bragg Cultural Resources Management Program, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

¹²⁰ “Murdock, Inc. - Cincinnati, OH.” <www.firehydrant.org/pictures/murdock.html>, August 2005.

Other Small-Scale Elements:

Overhills Lake has the wooden remnants of stairs leading into the lake from the concrete lip of the dam. A support structure for a diving board is still attached to the dam surface, but there is no diving board.

A small metal trashcan and a metal golf ball cleaner are located deep in a magnolia grove at the easternmost corner of Bird Song. These appurtenances were likely in the open, or just in the shade, when Hole No. 1 teed off from this area of Bird Song. The elements are not historic.

A nonhistoric light standard is located near the former green of Hole No. 18 on the golf course. The light pole is metal and the globe is round glass.

9. Views and Vistas

The Overhills Historic District is home to marvelous views and vistas of natural and designed landscape elements.

Primary vistas include views of all of the pine allées, including the golf course, hunt club, and entrance road to the Hill.

Views from Croatan east to the golf course are captured in photographs with this report, as well as views from Hole No. 2 west back toward the Hill and Croatan. The view from the golf course to Croatan from the last thirty years or so show a heavily vegetated estate compound; in contrast, historic views of the Hill from the golf course in the 1920s show a site void of vegetation with the massive two-and-one-half story clubhouse, Harriman Cottage, the historic wood water tank, and Covert Cottage from left to right in that order. Small hedges are in place in front of Harriman and small junipers or boxwoods appear to have been planted on the access drive to Covert. The evolution and growth of the Hill's landscaping alone over time has changed that view remarkably.

Overhills Lake, at the dam and from every angle around it, provides a striking view of the cypress-gum swamps with the cypress knees reflected in the water. There are views of native longleaf pine forest from nearly every estate road through that particular habitat. Nursery Road at Jumping Run Creek, as well as estate roads to the west of Jumping Run Creek, provide scenic views of the bottomlands, especially in the morning with the mist rising.

One historic view that is no longer intact is the view from the front of the Paul Lindley cottage at Lindley Nursery Complex North to the nursery fields below. This vista has been blocked by dense forest growing up over the years.

10. Archeological Sites

Southeastern Archeological Services, Inc. of Athens, Georgia, has undertaken Phase I and II archaeological investigations at Overhills for Fort Bragg through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District, as well as completed testing for 50 sites on the Overhills tract and concluded that 21 archeological sites are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.¹²¹ Conclusions from the 2000 report are that Overhills has received relatively little ground disturbances over the years, other than cultivation along bottomlands, pine tar extraction and naturally occurring erosion to drainage areas. Therefore, it was concluded that there is a higher level of integrity of archaeological sites at the Overhills estate than other similar Sandhills sites due to its low intensity of use over the last one hundred years.

11. Ephemeral Qualities

Ephemeral qualities of the Overhills property include the rising mist on the bottomland fields along Jumping Run Creek during the early morning; the waves of wiregrasses rustling underneath the fire-scorched trunks of the longleaf pine; the wind whistling in the high pine canopies; and the striking gold-colored grasses in the pastures and field margins of the former estate.

PART III. METHODS / SOURCES / RECOMENDATIONS

A. Research Methods/Assumptions/Delimitations

Site assessments, field documentation and archival research were conducted on the Overhills site and at archival repositories from January 2005 to November 2005. Prior to starting an inventory of site features, a review of available site histories for the property was completed. A GIS database was created from existing Fort Bragg data to serve as the base map for the project and to record existing conditions for the site. Significant work was completed to modify and update the Fort Bragg GIS data for the requirements of this documentation effort.

Archival research was carried out at local, regional and state repositories, including the Fayetteville company archives of The Rose Group/McKim & Creed; the Overhills Archives at Fort Bragg Cultural Resources Management Program; the North Carolina Division of Archives and History (NCSHPO); the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill North Carolina Collection Photographic Archives; the Greensboro Historical Museum, Greensboro, NC; and the Erwin Historical Society Local History Museum in Harnett County.

¹²¹ Benson, Robert W. and David Leigh. *Archeological Testing of 50 Sites: Overhills Tract, Fort Bragg, Harnett and Cumberland Counties, North Carolina*. Fort Bragg, North Carolina: Department of the U.S. Army, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 2000.

Fieldwork involved a thorough assessment of existing conditions through photography, survey forms and notes. Extensive site investigations were carried out with measured drawings completed as appropriate.

The primary approach used for the preparation of this landscape documentation was two-fold:

1. To search for and consider archival resources that had not previously been reviewed during historic studies of the property, particularly Hood's 1992 National Register Nomination draft and the Mattson 2000 Architectural Study of the Overhills property. Efforts were focused on augmenting Hood and Mattson's very thorough and extensive research work. Archival discoveries would assist in assessing and documenting the existing landscape at Overhills.
2. To assess and document the existing landscape features of the Overhills landscape as it exists today, with historic accretions and modern intrusions, with the assumption that the continued deterioration and eventual loss of the cultural landscape will be forthcoming.

The development of a GIS base map for the Overhills property was a significant task in the documentation and analysis of the property. It was realized during the course of the project that the Fort Bragg GIS data contains large-scale inaccuracies in some of its data, particularly its hydrology layers and the boundaries of the property. Further, the road system data does not reflect the current alignment of all roads at the Overhills site, although the majority of the roads adjacent to building complexes are correct as well as the major historic routes on the property. The minor estate roads that cross through forest and field margins of Overhills are highly changeable as new firebreaks are constructed and drainage ways evolve. The source of the road system data is thought to have been acquired through GPS in the 1990s; however, the lack of metadata¹²² for the Fort Bragg GIS system means that the original source of the digital data is not documented.¹²³

To introduce a consistency to the base map, hand manipulation was required to reference the current road system, boundary and hydrologic information. The basic point of reference used for all data layers was the Overhills Lake dam, due to its centralized location on the site and the visibility of this linear landscape feature. Therefore, the precision of all data layers is greatest at the Overhills Lake dam and becomes less precise the greater distance that is traveled from this structure. However, for the purposes of this documentation project, the spatial relationships between landscape features at Overhills are accurate.

¹²² Metadata (data about data) covers such aspects as data quality, content, condition and state.
<http://www.kralidis.ca/gis/project/GISmeta>. August 2005.

¹²³ Personal communications with Stacy Culpepper, Fort Bragg Cultural Resources Management Program, August 2005.

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C. Future Research Recommendations

Recommendations for potential areas of future research include the following:

- 1) Complete an exhaustive review of the Overhills archives located at the Fort Bragg Cultural Resources Management Program Office,
- 2) Conduct oral interviews with remaining Rockefeller heirs, such as Kim Elliman, as well as children of former Overhills employees (Fort Bragg Cultural Resources Management Program maintains a list),
- 3) Investigate additional archives of Beatrix Jones Farrand, other than the University of California at Berkeley archival collection, for any association with the design and layout of the Overhills property, and
- 4) Explore leads with the Rockefeller Archive Center in Sleepy Hollow, NY, for records associated with direct descendants of John D. Rockefeller Sr. (the archives does not collect records of indirect members of the Rockefeller family such as Percy Avery Rockefeller) to reveal a potential connection between Beatrix Jones Farrand and the Overhills estate.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The archival research and field documentation for the Overhills historic landscape study were conducted during the months of January 2005 to November 2005 for Fort Bragg through the US Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District, as part of a larger mitigation of the Overhills property by the United States Department of Defense.

The fieldwork, measured drawings and historical report were prepared by The Jaeger Company of Gainesville and Athens, Georgia. The project team consisted of Diana Miles Werling, project manager / historic preservation / historian; Brian LaBrie, historic preservation; Madie Fischetti, landscape architecture; Luke Rushing, landscape architecture; Anne Wilfer, landscape architecture; Dale Jaeger, historic preservation / landscape architecture; Libby Hodges, landscape architecture; and Katherine A. Anderson, historic preservation. Formal photography was completed by Lee Anne Romberg White (April 2005) and Jim Lockhart (October 2005).

The interpretive hand sketches of the Overhills landscape were drawn by Anne Wilfer of The Jaeger Company. Luke Rushing contributed the hand sketches of the Sections on Sheet 5 for the drawing package for HALS NC-03.

Special thanks goes to the Fort Bragg Cultural Resources Management Program staff for their abundant and gracious assistance throughout the course of the project, particularly Jeff Irwin, Michelle Michael, Lisa McNeely, Heather McDonald, Stacy Culpepper, and Charles Heath. Also helpful in providing information about the Overhills tract was Glen Prillaman, Chief of the Real Property and Planning Branch, Fort Bragg Directorate of Public Works. Their knowledge and deep passion for the Overhills property brought the project to life from the very start.

Many thanks also to Sol Rose and Gordon Rose, engineering and surveying, The Rose Group/McKim & Creed, Fayetteville, North Carolina, for sharing their company archives, their GIS expertise, and their first-hand knowledge of the Overhills tract gained over the last fifty years.

FIGURES

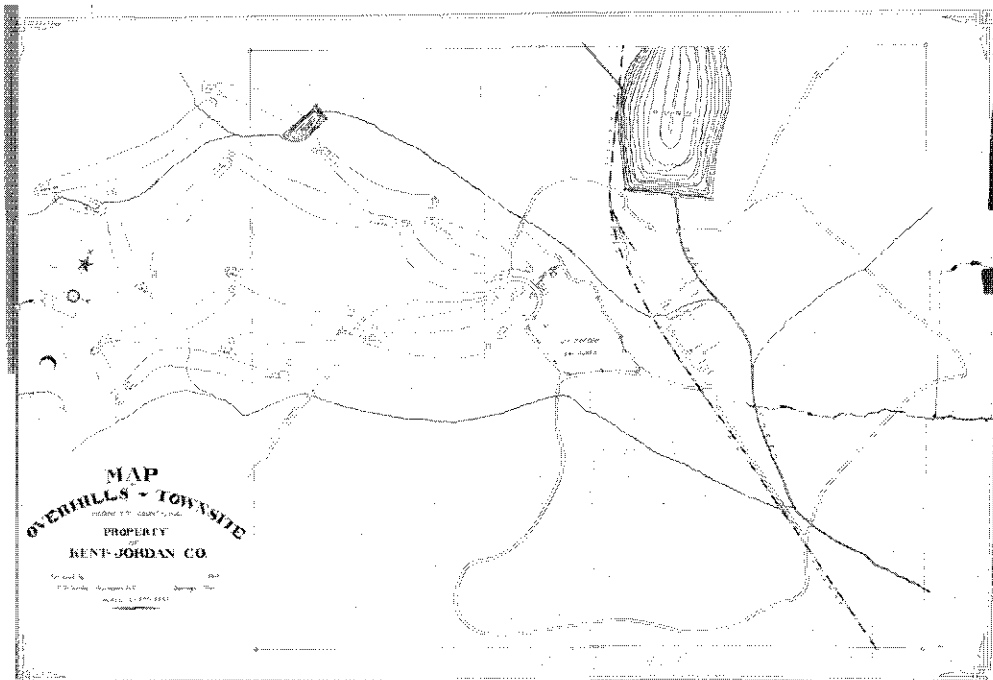


Figure 1: 1913 Map of the Overhills Townsite, Property of Kent-Jordan. Overhills Archives FBCRMP.

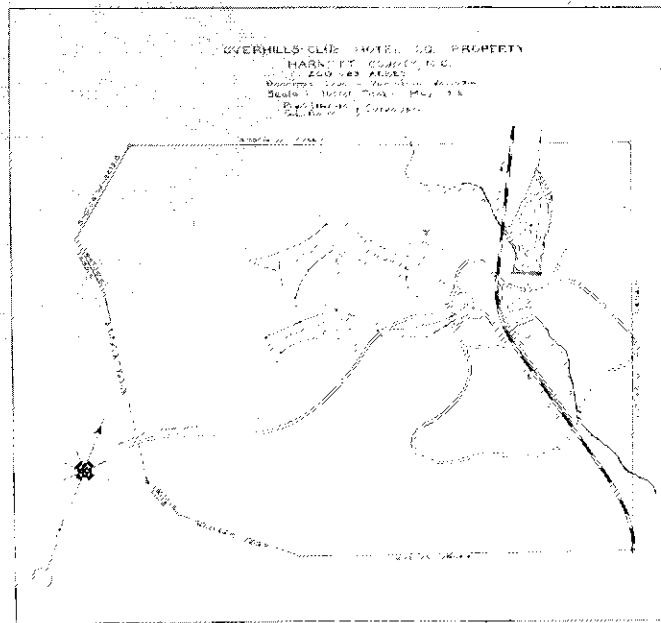


Figure 2: Overhills Club Hotel Co. Property, 1916. Overhills Archives FBCRMP.

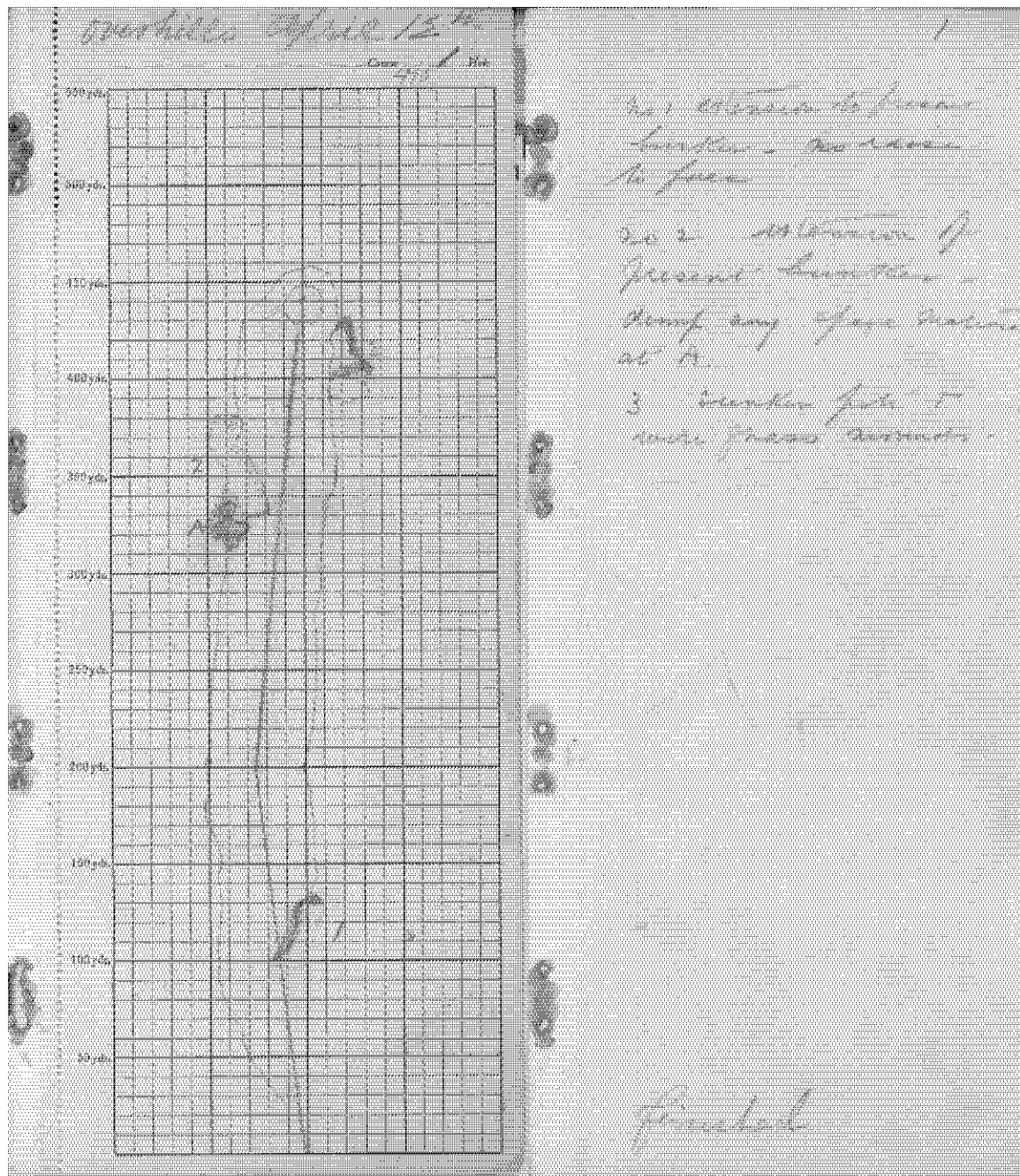


Figure 3: Donald Ross Sketch Book, Hole No. 1 and notes, undated. Overhills Archives, FBCRMP.

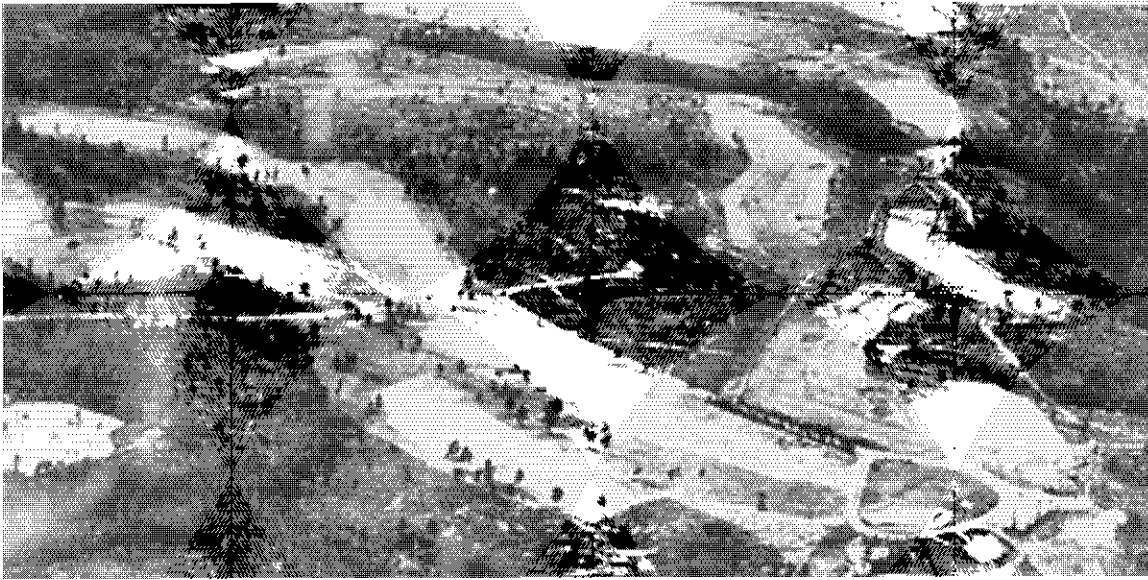


Figure 4: View of Overhills Golf Course, ca. 1920s. Overhills Archives FBCRMP.

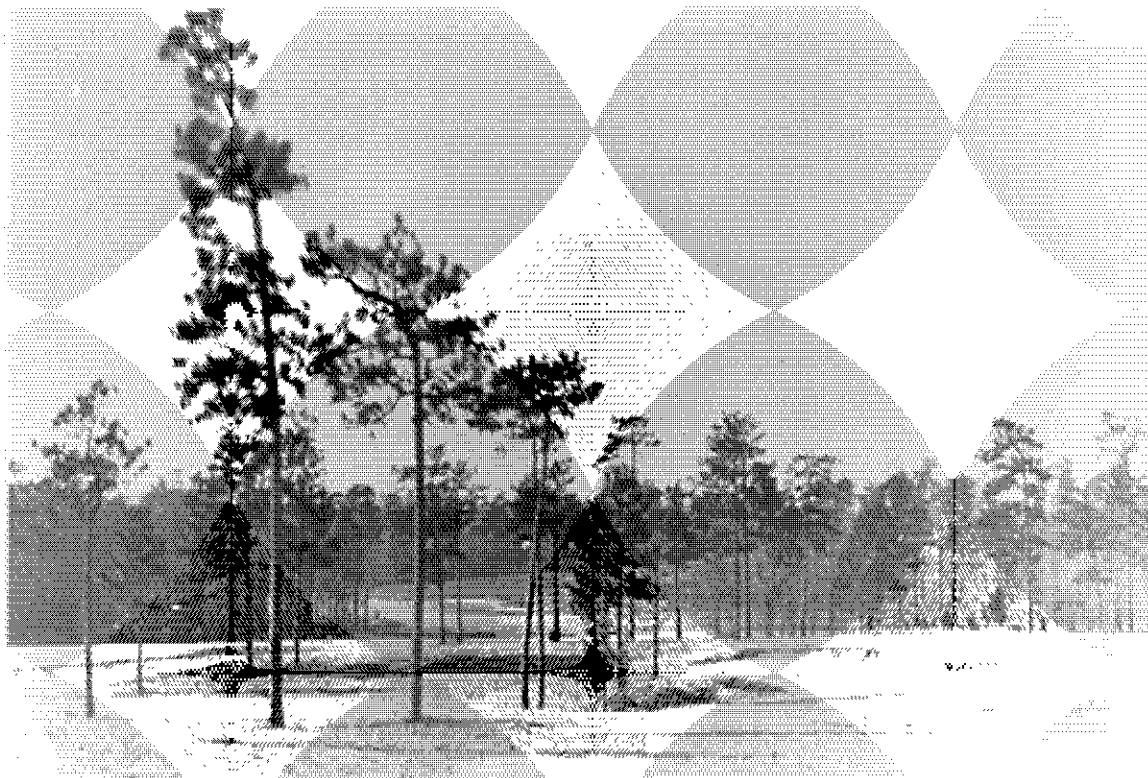


Figure 5: Holes No. 4 far left, No. 5 center rear, No. three right, Overhills Golf Course, ca. 1920s. Overhills Archives FBCRMP.



Figure 6: Holes No. 2 and No. 7, Overhills Golf Course. Note the clubhouse, Harriman Cottage, water tank and Covert Cottage on the horizon. Ca. 1920s. Overhills Archives FBCRMP.



Figure 7: Hole No. 6, Overhills Golf Course with unknown people, ca. 1920s. Overhills Archives FBCRMP.